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THE SEXUAL LIFE OF SAVAGES

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE FAMILY AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES. London: University of London Press (out of print), 1913.

PRIMITIVE RELIGION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION. Cracow (in Polish, out of print), 1915.

"THE NATIVES OF MAILU." Adelaide: *Trans. of the R. Soc. of S. Australia for* 1915. Pp. 494-706. 1915.

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SEX AND REPRESSION IN SAVAGE SOCIETY. London: Kegan Paul and Co.; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1927.

TWO PRETTY GIRLS—ONE DISFIGURED BY MOURNING

[*Ch. VI*, 3; *ch. X*, 2]

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF SAVAGES

IN NORTH-WESTERN MELANESIA

An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea

By

BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI
Ph. D., D. Sc.

VOLUME ONE

With a Preface
BY HAVELOCK ELLIS

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ROBERT MOND EXPEDITION TO NEW GUINEA,
1914–1918
Printed in the U. S. A.

YALE UNIVERSITY

To my friend

E. POWYS MATHERS

PREFACE

By Havelock Ellis

The sexual life of savages has long awaited its natural historian. Owing to sex taboos, that weigh at least as much on the civilized as on the savage mind, this subject has always been veiled in mystery. The mystery has been fascinating or sombre according to the general attitude to savagery that happened to prevail. In the eighteenth century it was fascinating. That century, especially in its French mode, virtually discovered what is loosely and incorrectly termed "Primitive Man," and found his finest embodiment in the new and Paradisiacal world of America and Oceania. These French voyagers and missionaries (though there were some notable but more sober-minded English and other sailors among them) were delighted and intoxicated as these strange manners and customs, often so gracious and fantastic, opened out before their astonished vision. They were incapable of understanding them, and they had no time to penetrate below the surface, but the enthusiastic impressions they honestly set down seemed a revelation to the Parisian world with its own widely unlike artificialities and conventions. Then was developed the conception of the "noble" savage of whom Tacitus had caught a glimpse in primeval German forests living in "a state of Nature." The nineteenth century grew contemptuous of what seemed to it Rous-

seau's superficial and imaginative vision of the natural man. But Rousseau had really been a careful student of the narratives of explorers in his time, as there is clear evidence to show. The conclusions he drew were not more extravagant than those at the opposite extreme drawn by later generations and sometimes still persisting to-day. Diderot, likewise, when he wrote his famous *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville,* to exhibit to his fellow-countrymen the superior reasonableness in matters of sexual ethics of the Tahitian, brought forward various correct facts—already set down in the attractive narrative of the great French navigator—but misleadingly, because he was ignorant of the social framework to which they belonged.

In the nineteenth century the more sombre view prevailed. The explorers were now mainly English, and they carried with them the Anglo-Saxon Puritanism for which all sexual customs that are unfamiliar are either shocking or disgusting. "Obscene" was the word commonly used, and it was left to the reader's imagination to picture what that might mean. The sexual behaviour of savages seemed mostly unspeakable. The urethral subincision practised by some Australian tribes was mysteriously named "the terrible rite." A similar mutilation of the nose or ear, or anywhere a little higher up or a little lower down, would not have seemed "terrible"; but at that particular spot it aroused a shuddering and shamefaced awe.

In the twentieth century we have moved towards a calmer attitude. We are learning to view our own sex

taboos a little less solemnly. At the same time we are acquiring a more scientific spirit in the investigation of the few remaining peoples yet not too completely under the influence of our own civilization, regarding them no longer with either adulation or contempt, but as valuable witnesses to unfamiliar aspects of our common human nature. The Cambridge Expedition to Torres Straits with its scientifically trained observers, and all that that expedition led to in subsequent observations in other parts of the world by such distinguished workers as Rivers and Seligman, may be regarded as a landmark. But we still pined in vain for a picture of the sexual life of any unspoilt people. One or two investigators, like Roth in Queensland, noted a few precise objective facts of the sex life, and more recently Felix Bryk, in his *Neger-Eros*, has produced a valuable study of the erotic life in Equatorial Africa, but it has not been easy to find any really comprehensive picture.

Such a task needed, indeed, a rare combination of qualifications; not only a scientific equipment but a familiarity with various new fertilizing ideas, not always considered scientific, which have of late been thrown into the anthropological field; a long and intimate knowledge of the people to be investigated and of their language, for it is not only in civilization that the sexual life tends to be shy and recessive; not least, there was required in the investigator a freedom alike from the traditions of Anglo-Saxon Puritanism, however estimable in their own place, and from the almost equally unfortunate reactions to which the revolt against those traditions may lead.

All these qualifications are in a rare degree combined in Dr. Malinowski: the scientific outfit, the sensitive intelligence, the patience in observation, the sympathetic insight. He is known by numerous monographs on various sociological aspects of savage culture, mostly based on his research among the Trobriand Islanders off the east coast of New Guinea, among whom he lived in close touch for two years. His *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*—the original and elaborate analysis of the peculiar *kula* exchange system of the Trobriands—is recognized as a brilliant achievement of ethnographic research. It is, indeed, more than merely ethnographic, and as Sir James Frazer, who introduced the book, pointed out, it is characteristic of Dr. Malinowski's method that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. An institution that, at the first glance, might seem to be merely economic, is found in his searching hands to be not merely commercial, but bound up with magic and ministering to the emotional and æsthetic needs of the people who exercise it.

In the field of sex, as I have remarked, it is only to-day that investigation has become possible. And this not simply because our sex taboos have at last lost something of their stringency. It is only to-day that it has here become possible to ask those right questions which, as Bacon said, are the half of knowledge. A quarter of a century ago the study of sex was merely the study of extravagant aberrations, and, outside this, just sentimental rhapsody. It has now become—accordingly as we approach it—either a field of natural history, to be studied in the ordinary spirit of the field naturalist, or else a department of

psychological dynamics where forces are at play which may often be traced beneath the surface and take on strange forms and influence even those modes of activity which seem most remote from sex. In this department, the genius of Freud—as some think, in ways that are exaggerated—has given an impetus to the study of the sexual impulse and to its possible manifestations even in the myths and customs of savages. To these developments Dr. Malinowski is fully alive. He was even prepared at one time to be much more nearly a Freudian than we can now describe him. To-day he is neither Freudian nor anti-Freudian; he recognizes the fertilizing value of Freud's ideas, and he is prepared to utilize them whenever they seem helpful in elucidating the phenomena under investigation. These phenomena he views with a characteristically wide outlook; while not neglecting the precise technique of the erotic art among the Trobriand Islanders, he duly investigates their whole sexual life in its æsthetic, emotional, family, and social implications. Now that he has shown the way, other students doubtless will be inspired to follow. But in this field not all who are called are chosen. The special combination of needed qualifications can rarely be found, and meanwhile the opportunities are every year diminishing. It may safely be said that *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-western Melanesia* will become a classic of which the value must increase with the passage of time.

So far I have been speaking of this work in its relation to science. But I believe that it also has wider relations. It may interest not only those who are concerned with

origins and with what they may perhaps consider exotic forms of social life, but also those who are concerned with the present or the future, and the forms of social life at home.

We often overlook the fact, which is yet well established, that the rate and level of evolution are not at every point equal. We do not place the negro at the summit of human development; but at some points he is further evolved in physical form than the white man. Or, if we take a wider range, it has long been clear that the forefoot of the horse has reached a higher stage of evolution than that of other animals in general much higher in the scale. So, also, on the psychic side, we are accustomed to regard the civilization of classic antiquity as in some respects higher than our own which yet has progressed much further along other lines.

In the life of sex we are concerned with an impulse of profound interest to mankind from the first. It occupies a field, one may note, which may be cultivated even by peoples whose level of culture is, in many important respects, far from high. It may even be said that an absorption in other fields of culture is actually detrimental to culture in the sexual field, and, as we know, a marvellous expansion of the mechanical arts and exalted achievements in the intellectual sphere may co-exist with a sexual culture thrust back into conventions and routines which are scarcely even regarded as open to discussion. It is possible to be sensitive and alive to achievement in the more complex human arts and yet, at the same time, remain

crude in the more fundamental arts. The reverse development is also possible.

So it may happen that, in presence of the picture Dr. Malinowski here presents to us, we become aware, not only of a unique contribution to anthropological research, but of suggestions bearing on civilized life and its efforts towards social reform. The Trobriand Islanders are a small community living in a confined space; they only supply one of the patterns of savage life, though it may well be a fairly typical pattern. When we study it we find not merely that in this field the savage man is very like the civilized man, with the like vices and virtues under different forms, but we may even find that in some respects the savage has here reached a finer degree of civilization than the civilized man. The comparisons we can thus make furnish suggestions even for the critical study of our own social life.

H. E.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE chosen for this book the plainest, that is the most truthful title, partly to contribute towards the rehabilitation of the indispensable and often misused term sexual, partly to announce directly what the reader has to expect in the most outspoken paragraphs. Sex is not a mere physiological transaction to the primitive South Sea Islander any more than it is to us; it implies love and love-making; it becomes the nucleus of such venerable institutions as marriage and the family; it pervades art and it produces its spells and its magic. It dominates in fact almost every aspect of culture. *Sex*, in its widest meaning—and it is thus that I have used it in the title of this book—is rather a sociological and cultural force than a mere bodily relation of two individuals. But the scientific treatment of this subject obviously involves also a keen interest in the biological nucleus. The anthropologist must therefore give a description of the direct approaches between two lovers, as we find them in Oceania, shaped by their traditions, obeying their laws, following the customs of their tribe.

In Anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all

can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making. The institutions of the Trobriand community allow mere brutal passion to ripen into life-long love, to be shot through with personal affinities, to be strengthened by the manifold bonds and attachments created through the advent of children, by the mutual anxieties and hopes, by the common aims and interests of family life.

It is perhaps in the blending of the directly sensual with the romantic and in the wide and weighty sociological consequences of what to start with is the most personal event—it is in this richness and multiplicity of love that lies its philosophic mystery, its charm for the poet and its interest for the anthropologist. This many-sidedness of love exists among the Trobrianders as well as with us, and it brings nearer to us even that which to most might at first appear crude and uncontrolled.

To ignore this latter aspect, however, to shirk treating the material foundations of love would in a scientific work mean completely to stultify all results. It would be to commit the unpardonable sin of evading the real issue. Anyone who does not wish to be concerned with sex need not acquire or read this book; and those who approach the subject in a non-scientific spirit may be warned from

the outset that they will find nothing suggestive or alluring in the following chapters.

I want to make it quite clear that the comparisons between native and European conditions scattered here and there, especially in the later chapters, are not meant to serve as a sociological parallel—for that they are far too slight. Still less are the native-European parallels of the present book meant to provide a homily on our own failings or a pæan on our virtues. They are given simply because, in order to explain strange facts, it is necessary to hark back to familiar ones. The Anthropologist in his observations has to understand the native through his own psychology, and he must form the picture of a foreign culture from the elements of his own and of others practically and theoretically known to him. The whole difficulty and art of field-work consists of starting from those elements which are familiar in the foreign culture and gradually working the strange and diverse into a comprehensible scheme. In this the learning of a foreign culture is like the learning of a foreign tongue: at first mere assimilation and crude translation, at the end a complete detachment from the original medium and a mastery of the new one. And since an adequate ethnographic description must reproduce in miniature the gradual, lengthy, and painful processes of field-work, the references to the familiar, the parallels between Europe and the Trobriands have to serve as starting points.

After all, to reach the reader I have to rely upon his personal experiences which are built up in our own society. Exactly as I have to write in English, and translate native terms or texts into English, so also I have, in order

to make them real and comprehensible, to translate Melanesian conditions into our own. Whatever error there is in either procedure is inevitable. An Anthropologist may be well aware of *traduttore traditore*, but he cannot help it—he cannot banish his few patient readers for a couple of years to a South Sea atoll, and make them live the life for themselves; he has, alas, to write books about his savages and lecture on them!

One more point about the method of presentation. Every conscientious scientific observer should state not only what he knows and how he has come to know it, but also indicate those gaps in his knowledge of which he is aware, the failures and omissions in his field-work. I have given already (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, ch. i) a full account of my credentials: length of time spent on the islands, linguistic qualifications, methods of collecting documents and statements. I shall not repeat this all here, and the few necessary additional remarks on the difficult study of native intimate life, the reader will find in the text (ch. ix, 9; ch. x, intro.; chs. xii and xiii, intros.)

The competent and experienced ethnographer and anthropologist—and only such a one is interested in the margin of accuracy, in the methodology of evidence and in the gaps in information—will easily see from the data presented throughout this book, where the documentation is thin and where it is full. When I make a simple statement without illustrating it from personal observation or adducing facts, this means that I am mainly relying on what I was told by my native informants. This is, of course, the least reliable part of my material.

I am especially aware that my knowledge of obstetrical facts and of the women's attitude at pregnancy and childbirth is rather meagre. Again the father's behaviour at the time of childbirth and male psychology with regard to it, were not studied as fully as they should have been. Many minor points throughout the book are treated in a manner which will make clear to the specialist, not only where the information is incomplete, but also what further inquiry would be needed to fill out the gaps. On most points of fundamental importance, I am convinced that I have come down to bedrock.

One gap, regrettable but hardly to be remedied, is the small number of illustrations bearing directly on erotic life. Since this, however, takes place in deep shadow, literally as well as figuratively, photographs could only be faked, or at best, posed—and faked or posed passion (or sentiment) is worthless.

The many obligations incurred in the course of my field-work have been acknowledged elsewhere (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*); but I should like here to mention a very special indebtedness to my friend, Billy Hancock, trader and pearl-buyer in the Trobriands, whose mysterious death occurred while I was writing this book. He was ill, and awaiting the South-bound boat at Samarai, the European settlement in the east of New Guinea. One evening he disappeared, never to be seen or heard of again. He was not only an excellent informant and helpmate, but a real friend, whose company and assistance added a great deal of material comfort and moral support in a somewhat exacting and tedious existence.

In writing this book I was greatly stimulated by the

interest taken in it by Mr. Havelock Ellis, whose work and whose example as a pioneer in honest thought and outspoken research I have always admired and revered. His preface materially enhances the value of this book.

The group of my friends, pupils, and colleagues who have been associated with Anthropological Research Work and Teaching at the London School of Economics for the last few years, have helped me greatly to clarify my ideas and to present my material, more especially on the subject of family life, kinship organization, and marriage law. The names of Mrs. Robert Aitken (Miss Barbara Freire-Marecco), of Dr. R. W. Firth (now in the Solomons), of Mr. E. E. Evans-Pritchard (now among the Azande), of Miss Camilla Wedgwood (now in Australia), of Dr. Gordon Brown (now in Tanganyika), of Dr. Hortense Powdermaker (now on the way to Papua), of Mr. I. Schapera (late of South Africa), of Mr. T. J. A. Yates (late of Egypt), of Miss Audrey Richards, will in my mind be always gratefully remembered in association with the drafting of the more difficult sociological chapters of this book.

My greatest debt in this book, as in most I have written, is to my wife. Her counsel and practical co-operation have made the writing of the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and of this an agreeable task instead of a drudgery. If there is any value and interest in these books for me personally, it comes from her share in the common work.

B. M.

LONDON.
January, 1929.

THE TROBRIAND ISLANDS

THE CENTRAL PLACE OF OMARAKANA

The Chief's large yam house is in the centre, behind it resting shelters for visitors, to the left the Chief's personal hut, and in the background one or two houses of

CHAPTER I

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SEXES IN TRIBAL LIFE

MAN and woman in the Trobriand Islands—their relations in love, in marriage, and in tribal life—this will be the subject of the present study.

The most dramatic and intense stage in the intercourse between man and woman, that in which they love, mate, and produce children, must occupy the dominant place in any consideration of the sexual problem. To the average normal person, in whatever type of society we find him, attraction by the other sex and the passionate and sentimental episodes which follow are the most significant events in his existence, those most deeply associated with his intimate happiness and with the zest and meaning of life. To the sociologist, therefore, who studies a particular type of society, those of its customs, ideas, and institutions which centre round the erotic life of the individual should be of primary importance. For if he wants to be in tune with his subject and to place it in a natural, correct perspective, the sociologist must, in his research, follow the trend of personal values and interests. That which means supreme happiness to the individual must be made a fundamental factor in the scientific treatment of human society.

But the erotic phase, although the most important, is only one among many in which the sexes meet and enter into relations with each other. It cannot be studied outside its proper context, without, that is, being linked up with the legal status of man and woman; with their domestic relations; and with the distribution of their economic functions. Courtship, love, and mating in a given society are influenced in every detail by the way in which the sexes face one another in public and in private, by their position in tribal law and custom, by the manner in which they participate in games and amusements, by the share each takes in ordinary daily toil.

The story of a people's love-making necessarily has to begin with an account of youthful and infantile associations, and it leads inevitably forward to the later stage of permanent union and marriage. Nor can the narrative break off at this point, since science cannot claim the privilege of fiction. The way in which men and women arrange their common life and that of their children reacts upon their love-making, and the one stage cannot be properly understood without a knowledge of the other.

This book deals with sexual relations among the natives of the Trobriand Islands, a coral archipelago lying to the north-east of New Guinea. These natives belong to the Papuo-Melanesian race, and in their physical appearance, mental equipment, and social organization combine a majority of Oceanic characteristics with certain features of the more backward Papuan population from the mainland of New Guinea.[1]

[1] For a full general account of the Northern Massim, of whom the

I

THE PRINCIPLES OF MOTHER-RIGHT

We find in the Trobriands a matrilineal society, in which descent, kinship, and every social relationship are legally reckoned through the mother only, and in which women have a considerable share in tribal life, even to the taking of a leading part in economic, ceremonial, and magical activities—a fact which very deeply influences all the customs of erotic life as well as the institution of marriage. It will be well, therefore, first to consider the sexual relation in its widest aspect, beginning with some account of those features of custom and tribal law which underlie the institution of mother-right, and the various views and conceptions which throw light upon it; after this, a short sketch of each of the chief domains of tribal life—domestic, economic, legal, ceremonial, and magical—will combine to show the respective spheres of male and female activity among these natives.

The idea that it is solely and exclusively the mother who builds up the child's body, the man in no way contributing to its formation, is the most important factor in the legal system of the Trobrianders. Their views on the process of procreation, coupled with certain mythological and animistic beliefs, affirm, without doubt or re-

Trobrianders form a section, cf. the classical treatise of Professor C. G. Seligman, *Melanesians of British New Guinea,* Cambridge, 1910, which also shows the relation of the Trobrianders to the other races and cultures on and around New Guinea. A short account of Trobriand culture will also be found in my *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (E. P. Dutton and Co., 1922).

serve, that the child is of the same substance as its mother, and that between the father and the child there is no bond of physical union whatsoever (see ch. vii).

That the mother contributes everything to the new being to be born of her is taken for granted by the natives, and forcibly expressed by them. "The mother feeds the infant in her body. Then, when it comes out, she feeds it with her milk." "The mother makes the child out of her blood." "Brothers and sisters are of the same flesh, because they come of the same mother." These and similar expressions describe their attitude towards this, their fundamental principle of kinship.

This attitude is also to be found embodied, in an even more telling manner, in the rules governing descent, inheritance, succession in rank, chieftainship, hereditary offices, and magic—in every regulation, in fact, concerning transmission by kinship. Social position is handed on in the mother-line from a man to his sister's children, and this exclusively matrilineal conception of kinship is of paramount importance in the restrictions and regulations of marriage, and in the taboos on sexual intercourse. The working of these ideas of kinship can be observed, breaking out with a dramatic intensity, at death. For the social rules underlying burial, lamentation, and mourning, together with certain very elaborate ceremonies of food distribution, are based on the principle that people joined by the tie of maternal kinship form a closely knit group, bound by an identity of feelings, of interests, and of flesh. And from this group, even those united to it by marriage and by the father-to-child relation are sharply excluded,

as having no natural share in the bereavement (see ch. vi, secs. 2-4).

These natives have a well-established institution of marriage, and yet are quite ignorant of the man's share in the begetting of children. At the same time, the term "father" has, for the Trobriander, a clear, though exclusively social, definition: it signifies the man married to the mother, who lives in the same house with her, and forms part of the household. The father, in all discussions about relationship, was pointedly described to me as *tomakava*, a "stranger," or, even more correctly, an "outsider." This expression would also frequently be used by natives in conversation, when they were arguing some point of inheritance or trying to justify some line of behaviour, or again when the position of the father was to be belittled in some quarrel.

It will be clear to the reader, therefore, that the term "father," as I use it here, must be taken, not as having the various legal, moral, and biological implications that it holds for us, but in a sense entirely specific to the society with which we are dealing. It might seem better, in order to avoid any chance of such misconception, not to have used our word "father" at all, but rather the native one *tama*, and to have spoken of the "*tama* relationship" instead of "fatherhood"; but, in practice, this would have proved too unwieldy. The reader, therefore, when he meets the word "father" in these pages, should never forget that it must be defined, not as in the English dictionary, but in accordance with the facts of native life. I may add that this rule applies to all terms which carry

special sociological implication, that is to all terms of relationship, and such words as "marriage," "divorce," "betrothal," "love," "courtship," and the like.

What does the word *tama* (father) express to the native? "Husband of my mother" would be the answer first given by an intelligent informant. He would go on to say that his *tama* is the man in whose loving and protecting company he has grown up. For, since marriage is patrilocal in the Trobriands, since the woman, that is to say, moves to her husband's village community and lives in his house, the father is a close companion to his children; he takes an active part in the cares which are lavished upon them, invariably feels and shows a deep affection for them, and later has a share in their education. The word *tama* (father) condenses, therefore, in its emotional meaning, a host of experiences of early childhood, and expresses the typical sentiment existing between a boy or girl and a mature affectionate man of the same household; while socially it denotes the male person who stands in an intimate relation to the mother, and who is master of the household.

So far *tama* does not differ essentially from "father" in our sense. But as soon as the child begins to grow up and take an interest in things outside the affairs of the household and its own immediate needs, certain complications arise, and change the meaning of *tama* for him. He learns that he is not of the same clan as his *tama*, that his totemic appellation is different, and that it is identical with that of his mother. At the same time he learns that

all sorts of duties, restrictions, and concerns for personal pride unite him to his mother and separate him from his father. Another man appears on the horizon, and is called by the child *kadagu* ("my mother's brother"). This man may live in the same locality, but he is just as likely to reside in another village. The child also learns that the place where his *kada* (mother's brother) resides is also his, the child's, "own village"; that there he has his property and his other rights of citizenship; that there his future career awaits him; that there his natural allies and associates are to be found. He may even be taunted in the village of his birth with being an "outsider" (*tomakava*), while in the village he has to call "his own," in which his mother's brother lives, his father is a stranger and he a natural citizen. He also sees, as he grows up, that the mother's brother assumes a gradually increasing authority over him, requiring his services, helping him in some things, granting or withholding his permission to carry out certain actions; while the father's authority and counsel become less and less important.

Thus the life of a Trobriander runs under a two-fold influence—a duality which must not be imagined as a mere surface play of custom. It enters deeply into the existence of every individual, it produces strange complications of usage, it creates frequent tensions and difficulties, and not seldom gives rise to violent breaks in the continuity of tribal life. For this dual influence of paternal love and the matrilineal principle, which penetrates so far into the framework of institutions and into

the social ideas and sentiments of the native, is not, as a matter of fact, quite well adjusted in its working.[1]

It has been necessary to emphasize the relationship between a Trobriander and his father, his mother, and his mother's brother, for this is the nucleus of the complex system of mother-right or matriliny, and this system governs the whole social life of these natives. The question is, moreover, specially related to the main theme of this book: love-making, marriage, and kinship are three aspects of the same subject; they are the three facets which it presents in turn to sociological analysis.

2

A TROBRIAND VILLAGE

We have so far given the sociological definition of fatherhood, of the mother's brother's relation, and of the nature of the bond between mother and child; a bond founded on the biological facts of gestation and the extremely close psychological attachment which results from these. The best way to make this abstract statement clear will be to display the inter-working of the three relationships in an actual community in the Trobriands. Thus we can make our explanations concrete and get into touch with actual life instead of moving among abstractions; and, incidentally, too, we can introduce some personalities who will appear in the later parts of our narrative.

The village of Omarakana is, in a sense, the capital

[1] Cf. my *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, Harcourt, Brace, 1926.

of Kiriwina, the main district of these islands. It is the residence of the principal chief, whose name, prestige, and renown are carried far and wide over the Archipelagoes, though his power does not reach beyond the province of Kiriwina.[1] The village lies on a fertile, level plain in the northern part of the large, flat coral island of Boyowa (see map). As we walk towards it, from the lagoon anchorages on the western shore, the level road leads across monotonous stretches covered with low scrub, here and there broken by a tabooed grove, or by a large garden, holding vines trained on long poles and looking, in its developed form, like an exuberant hop-yard. We pass several villages on our way; the soil becomes more fertile and the settlement denser as we approach the long ridge of raised coral outcrop which runs along the eastern shore and shuts off the open sea from the inland plains of the island.

A large clump of trees appears at a distance—these are the fruit-trees, the palms and the piece of uncut virgin jungle which together surround the village of Omarakana. We pass the grove and find ourselves between two rows of houses, built in concentric rings round a large open space (see fig. 1 and plate 1). Between the outer ring and the inner one a circular street runs round the whole of the village, and in it, as we pass, we see groups of people sitting in front of their huts (see pl. 4). The outer ring consists of dwelling-houses, the inner of store-

[1] For further references to this eminent personage and for an account of chieftainship, see C. G. Seligman, *op. cit.*, chapters xlix and li; also my *Argonauts of the Western Pacific, passim,* and "Baloma, Spirits of the Dead," ***Journ. R. Anthrop. Inst.,*** 1916.

huts in which the *taytu*, a variety of yam, which forms the staple food of the natives, is kept from one harvest to the next. We are struck at once by the better finish, the greater constructive elaboration, and the superior embellishment and decoration which distinguish the yam-houses from the dwellings (see pl. 31). As we stand on the wide central space we can admire the circular row of storehouses in front of us, for both these and the dwellings always face the centre. In Omarakana a big yam-house belonging to the chief stands in the middle of this space. Somewhat nearer the ring, but still well in the centre stands another large building, the chief's living hut (see pls. 1 and 2).

This singularly symmetrical arrangement of the village is of importance, for it represents a definite sociological scheme. The inner place is the scene of the public and festive life. A part of it is the old-time burial ground of the villagers, and at one end is the dancing ground, the scene of all ceremonial and festive celebrations. The houses which surround it, the inner ring of store-huts that is, share its quasi-sacred character, a number of taboos being placed upon them. The street between the two rows is the theatre of domestic life and everyday occurrence (see pls. 4 and 39). Without over-labouring the point, the central place might be called the male portion of the village and the street that of the women.

Let us now make preliminary acquaintance with some of the more important inhabitants of Omarakana, beginning with the present chief, To'uluwa (see pls. 2 and 41). Not only are he and his family the most prominent

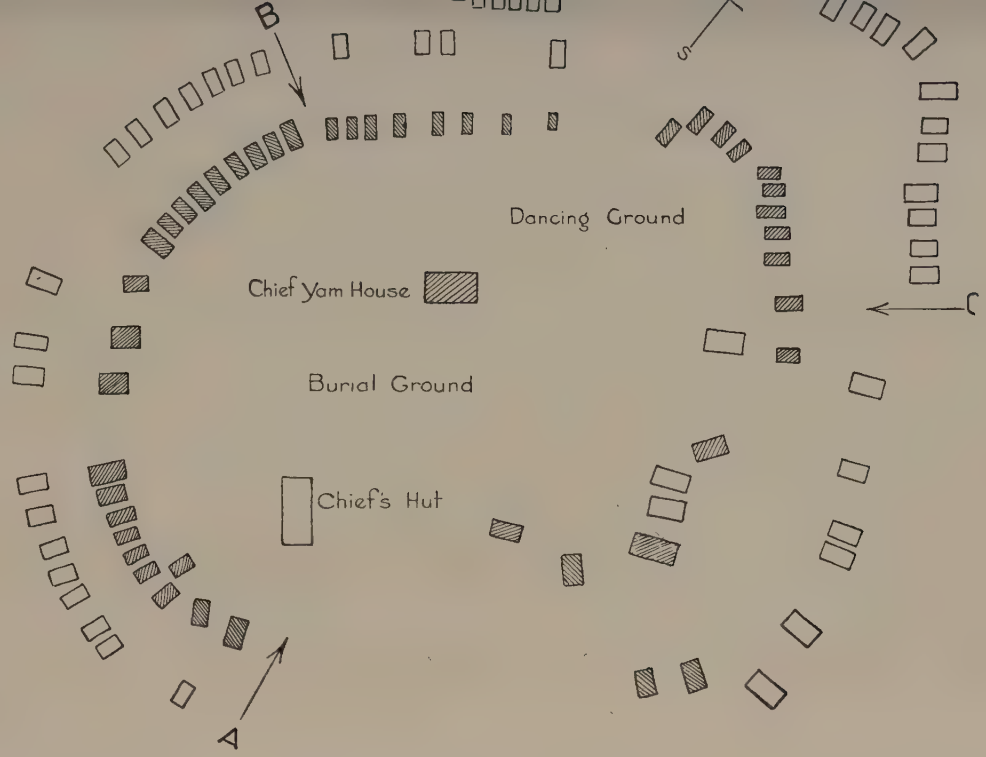


FIG. 1.—PLAN OF VILLAGE OF OMARAKANA

THE CHIEF AND HIS SONS

To'uluwa leaning against the platform, Namwana Guya'u on his right, and beyond other less important sons. Mwaydayli in the background. The large conch shell and the decorated gable are symbols of chieftainship.

[*Ch. I, 2; also ch. II, 1*]

members of the community, but they occupy more than half of the village. As we shall see (ch. v, sec. 4), the chiefs in the Trobriands have the privilege of polygamy. To'uluwa, who lives in the large house in the middle of the village, has a number of wives who occupy a whole row of huts (A—B on the plan, fig. 1). Also his maternal kinsmen, who belong to his family and sub-clan called Tabalu, have a separate space in the village for themselves (A—C). The third section (B—C) is inhabited by commoners who are not related to the chief either as kinsmen or as children.

The community is thus divided into three parts. The first consists of the chief and his maternal kinsmen, the Tabalu, all of whom claim the village as their own, and consider themselves masters of its soil with all attendant privileges. The second consists of the commoners, who are themselves divided into two groups: those claiming the rights of citizenship on mythological grounds (these rights are distinctly inferior to those of the chief's sub-clan, and the claimants remain in the village only as the chief's vassals or servants); and strangers in the hereditary service of the chief, who live in the village by that right and title. The third part consists of the chief's wives and their offspring.

These wives, by reason of patrilocal marriage, have to settle in their husband's village, and with them, of course, remain their younger children. But the grown-up sons are allowed to stay in the village only through the personal influence of their father. This influence overrules the tribal law that every man ought to live in his

own—that is his mother's—village. The chief is always much more attached to his children than to his maternal kinsmen. He prefers their company; like every typical Trobriand father, he takes, sentimentally at least, their side in any dispute; and he invariably tries to grant them as many privileges and benefits as possible. This state of affairs is naturally not altogether appreciated by the chief's legal successors, his maternal kinsmen, the children of his sister; and frequently considerable tension and sharp friction arise between the two sections in consequence.

Such a state of tension revealed itself recently in an acute upheaval, which shook the quiet tribal life of Omarakana and for years undermined its internal harmony.[1] There was a feud of long standing between Namwana Guya'u, the chief's favourite son, and Mitakata, his nephew and third in succession to the rule (see pl. 3). Namwana Guya'u was the most influential man in the village, after the chief, his father: To'uluwa allowed him to wield a great deal of power, and gave him more than his share of wealth and privilege.

One day, about six months after my arrival in Omarakana, the quarrel came acutely to a head. Namwana Guya'u, the chief's son, accused his enemy, Mitakata, the nephew and one of the heirs, of committing adultery with his wife, brought him before the White Resident Magistrate, and thereby caused him to be imprisoned for

[1] The following account has been already published (in *Crime and Custom,* pp. 101 sq.). Since it is an almost exact reproduction of the original entry in my field-notes, I prefer to give it here once more in the same form, with a few verbal alterations only.

PLATE 3

TWO HEREDITARY ENEMIES

The Chief's son and the heir apparent in dancing dress before their quarrel.

[*Ch. I, 2; also ch. II, 2; ch. X, intro.*]

PLATE 4

THE CHIEF'S FAVORITE WIFE AND HER FAMILY

Kadamwasila is seated in front of her living hut between her two daughters-in-law; behind stand their husbands, Kalogusa on the left and Yobukwa'u on the right. Their young sister Kenoria is taking a shower

a month or so. The news of this imprisonment reached the village from the Government compound, a few miles distant, at sunset, and created a panic. The chief shut himself up in his personal hut, full of evil forebodings for his favourite, who had thus rashly outraged tribal law and feeling. The kinsmen of the imprisoned heir to chieftainship were boiling with suppressed anger and indignation. As night fell, the subdued villagers settled down to a silent supper, each family over its solitary meal. There was nobody on the central place. Namwana Guya'u was not to be seen, the chief To'uluwa remained secluded in his hut, most of his wives and their children staying indoors also. Suddenly a loud voice rang out across the silent village. Bagido'u, the heir apparent and eldest brother of the imprisoned man, standing before his hut, cried out, addressing the offender of his family:

"Namwana Guya'u, you are a cause of trouble. We, the Tabalu of Omarakana, allowed you to stay here, to live among us. You had plenty of food in Omarakana. You ate of our food. You partook of the pigs brought to us as a tribute, and of the flesh. You sailed in our canoe. You built a hut on our soil. Now you have done us harm. You have told lies. Mitakata is in prison. We do not want you to stay here. This is our village! You are a stranger here. Go away! We drive you away! We drive you out of Omarakana."

These words were uttered in a loud, piercing voice, which trembled with strong emotion: each short sentence was spoken after a pause; each, like an individual missile,

was hurled across the empty space to the hut where Namwana Guya'u sat brooding. Next, the younger sister of Mitakata rose and spoke, and then a young man, one of their maternal nephews. Their words were in each case almost the same as Bagido'u's, the burden being the formula of dismissal or driving away, the *yoba*. These speeches were received in deep silence. Nothing stirred in the village. But, before the night was over, Namwana Guya'u had left Omarakana for ever. He had gone over and settled a few miles away, in Osapola, his "own" village, whence his mother came. For weeks she and his sister wailed for him with loud lamentations as for the dead. The chief remained for three days in his hut, and when he came out he looked aged and broken by grief. All his personal interest and affection were on the side of his favourite son, yet he could do nothing to help him. His kinsmen had acted strictly within their rights, and, according to tribal law, he could not possibly dissociate himself from them. No power could change the decree of exile. Once the words "Go away"—*bukula*, "we drive thee away"—*kayabaim*, had been pronounced, the man had to go. These words, very rarely uttered in earnest, have a binding force and an almost ritual power when pronounced by citizens against a resident outsider. A man who would try to brave the dreadful insult involved in them and remain in spite of them, would be dishonoured for ever. In fact, anything but immediate compliance with a ritual request is unthinkable for a Trobriand Islander.

The chief's resentment against his kinsmen was deep

and lasting. At first he would not even speak to them. For a year or so, not one of them dared to ask to be taken on overseas expeditions by him, although they were fully entitled to this privilege. Two years later, in 1917, when I returned to the Trobriands, Namwana Guya'u was still resident in the other village and keeping aloof from his father's kinsmen, though he frequently visited Omarakana in order to be in attendance on his father, especially when To'uluwa went abroad. His mother had died within a year after his expulsion. As the natives described it: "She wailed and wailed, refused to eat, and died." The relations between the two main enemies were completely broken, and Mitakata, the young chieftain who had been imprisoned, had repudiated his wife, who belonged to the same sub-clan as Namwana Guya'u. There was a deep rift in the whole social life of Kiriwina.

This incident was one of the most dramatic which I have ever witnessed in the Trobriands. I have described it at length, as it contains a striking illustration of the nature of mother-right, of the power of tribal law, and of the passions which work against and in spite of these. It shows also the deep, personal attachment which a father feels for his children, the tendency which he has to use all his personal influence to give them a strong position in the village, the opposition which this always evokes among his maternal kinsmen, and the tension and rifts thus brought about. Under normal conditions, in a smaller community where the contending powers are humbler and less important, such tension would merely mean that, after the father's death, the children would

have to return to his maternal kinsmen practically all the material benefits they had received from him during his lifetime. In any case, a good deal of discontent and friction and many roundabout methods of settlement are involved in this dual play of paternal affection and matrilineal authority: the chief's son and his maternal nephew can be described as predestined enemies.

This theme will recur in the progress of the following narrative. In discussing consent to marriage, we shall see the importance of paternal authority and the functions of the matrilineal kinsmen. The custom of cross-cousin marriage is a traditional reconciliation of the two opposing principles. The sexual taboos and prohibitions of incest also cannot be understood without a clear grasp of the principles discussed in this section.

So far we have met To'uluwa, his favourite wife Kadamwasila, whose death followed on the village tragedy, their son Namwana Guya'u, and his enemy Mitakata, son of the chief's sister, and these we shall meet again, for they were among my best informants. We shall also become acquainted with the other sons of the chief, and of his favourite wife, and with some of his maternal kinsmen and kinswomen. We shall follow several of them in their love affairs, and in their marriage arrangements; we shall have to pry into their domestic scandals, and to take an indiscreet interest in their intimate life. For all of them were, during a long period, under ethnographic observation, and I obtained much of my material through their confidences, and especially from their mutual scandal-mongering.

Many examples will also be given from other communities, and we shall make frequent visits to the lagoon villages of the western shore, to places on the south of the island, and to some of the neighbouring smaller islands of the Archipelago. In all these other communities more uniform and democratic conditions prevail, and this makes some difference in the character of their sexual life.

3

FAMILY LIFE

In entering the village we had to pass across the street between the two concentric rows of houses.[1] This is the normal setting of the everyday life of the community, and thither we must return in order to make a closer survey of the groups of people sitting in front of their dwellings (see pl. 4). As a rule we find that each group consists of one family only—man, wife, and children—taking their leisure, or engaged in some domestic activity which varies with the time of day. On a fine morning we would see them hastily eating a scanty breakfast, and then the man and woman preparing the implements for the day's work, with the help of the bigger children, while the baby is laid out of the way on a mat. Afterwards, during the cool hours of the forenoon, each family would probably set off to their work, leaving the village almost deserted. The man, in company with others, may be fishing or hunting or building a canoe or looking for

[1] A good glimpse of the "street," can be obtained on pl. 12, where two dwelling huts, right and left, can be seen behind the two yam houses in the middle.

timber. The woman may have gone collecting shell-fish or wild fruits. Or else both may be working in the gardens, or paying a visit. The man often does harder work than the woman, but when they return in the hot hours of the afternoon he will rest, while the woman busies herself with household affairs. Towards evening, when the descending sun casts longer, cooler shadows, the social life of the village begins. At this time we would see our family group in front of their hut, the wife preparing food, the children playing, the husband, perhaps, seated amusing the smallest baby. This is the time when neighbours call on one another, and conversation may be exchanged from group to group.

The frank and friendly tone of intercourse, the obvious feeling of equality, the father's domestic helpfulness, especially with the children, would at once strike any observant visitor. The wife joins freely in the jokes and conversation; she does her work independently, not with the air of a slave or a servant, but as one who manages her own department. She will order the husband about if she needs his help. Close observation, day after day, confirms this first impression. The typical Trobriand household is founded on the principles of equality and independence of function: the man is considered to be the master, for he is in his own village and the house belongs to him, but the woman has, in other respects, a considerable influence; she and her family have a great deal to do with the food supply of the household; she is the owner of separate possessions in the house; and she is—next to her brother—the legal head of her family.

CEREMONIAL COOKING OF TARO

The dumplings on platters (left) are first prepared by women and then thrown into large clay pots and stirred with long spatulæ. Note the miniature yam house (left centre) belonging to the small boy in front

The division of functions within the household is, in certain matters, quite definite. The woman has to cook the food, which is simple, and does not require much preparation. The main meal is taken at sunset, and consists of yams, taro, or other tubers, roasted in the open fire—or, less frequently, boiled in a small pot, or baked in the ground—with the occasional addition of fish or meat. Next morning the remains are eaten cold, and sometimes, though not regularly, fruit, shell-fish, or some other light snack may be taken at mid-day.

In some circumstances, men can and do prepare and cook the food: on journeys, oversea voyages, fishing or hunting expeditions, when they are without their women folk. Also, on certain occasions, when taro or sago dumplings are cooked in the large clay pots, men are required by tradition to assist their wives (pl. 5). But within the village and in normal daily life the man never cooks. It would be considered shameful for him to do so. "You are a he-cook (*tokakabwasi yoku*) would be said tauntingly. The fear of deserving such an epithet, of being laughed at or shamed (*kakayuwa*), is extreme. It arises from the characteristic dread and shame, found among savages, of not doing the proper thing, or, worse still, of doing something which is intrinsically the attribute of another sex or social class (see ch. xiii, secs. 1-4).

There are a number of occupations strictly assigned by tribal custom to one sex only. The manner of carrying loads is a very noteworthy example. Women have to carry the special feminine receptacle, the bell-shaped basket, or any other kind of load upon their heads; men

must carry only on the shoulder (pls. 6, 7, and 28). It would be with a real shudder, and a profound feeling of shame, that an individual would regard carrying anything in the manner proper to the opposite sex and nothing would induce a man to put any load on his head, even in fun.

An exclusively feminine department is the water supply. The woman has the water bottles of the household in her charge. These are made out of the woody shell of a mature coconut, with a stopper of twisted palm-leaf. In the morning or near sunset she goes, sometimes a full half-mile, to fill them at the water-hole: here the women forgather, resting and chatting, while one after another fills her water-vessels, cleans them, arranges them in baskets or on large wooden platters, and, just before leaving, gives the cluster a final sprinkling of water to cover it with a suggestive gloss of freshness. The water-hole is the woman's club and centre of gossip, and as such is important, for there is a distinct woman's public opinion and point of view in a Trobriand village, and they have their secrets from the male, just as the male has from the female.

We have already seen that the husband fully shares in the care of the children. He will fondle and carry a baby, clean and wash it, and give it the mashed vegetable food which it receives in addition to the mother's milk almost from birth. In fact, nursing the baby in the arms or holding it on the knees, which is described by the native word *kopo'i*, is the special rôle and duty of the father (*tama*). It is said of the children of unmarried

WOMEN WITH CARRYING PADS

Resting at the wayside with loads off, the pads remaining in position. The central figure wears a mourning relic over her shoulder.

[*Ch. I, 3; ch. VII, 4, footnote*]

women who, according to the native expression, are "without a *tama*" (that is, it must be remembered, without a husband to their mother), that they are "unfortunate" or "bad" because "there is no one to nurse and hug them (*gala taytala bikopo'i*)." Again, if anyone inquires why children should have duties towards their father, who is a "stranger" to them, the answer is invariably: "because of the nursing (*pela kopo'i*)," "because his hands have been soiled with the child's excrement and urine" (cf. ch. vii).

The father performs his duties with genuine natural fondness: he will carry an infant about for hours, looking at it with eyes full of such love and pride as are seldom seen in those of a European father. Any praise of the baby goes directly to his heart, and he will never tire of talking about and exhibiting the virtues and achievements of his wife's offspring. Indeed, watching a native family at home or meeting them on the road, one receives a strong impression of close union and intimacy between its members (see pls. 7, 26). Nor, as we have seen, does this mutual affection abate in later years. Thus, in the intimacy of domestic life, we discover another aspect of the interesting and complicated struggle between social and emotional paternity, on the one hand, and the explicitly acknowledged legal mother-right on the other.

It will be noticed that we have not yet penetrated into the interior of a house, for in fine weather the scene of family life is always laid in front of the dwelling. Only when it is cold and raining, at night, or for intimate uses, do the natives retire into the interior. On a wet or windy evening in the cooler season we should find the village

streets deserted, dim lights flickering through small interstices in the hut walls, and voices sounding from within in animated conversation. Inside, in a small space heavy with dense smoke and human exhalation, the people sit on the floor round the fire or recline on bedsteads covered with mats.

The houses are built directly on the ground and their floors are of beaten earth. On the adjoining diagrammatic plan (fig. ii) we see the main items of their very simple furniture: the fireplace, which is simply a ring of small stones with three large ones to support a pot; wooden sleeping bunks, placed one over another against the back and side walls opposite the fireplace (cf. pl. 8) and one or two shelves for nets, cooking pots, women's grass petticoats, and other household objects. The chief's personal dwelling is built like an ordinary house, but is larger. The yam houses are of somewhat different and more complicated construction, and are slightly raised above the ground.

A normal day in a typical household forces the family to live in close intimacy—they sleep in the same hut, they eat in common and spend the best part both of their working and of their leisure hours together.

4

THE DIVISION OF PROPERTY AND DUTIES ACCORDING TO SEX

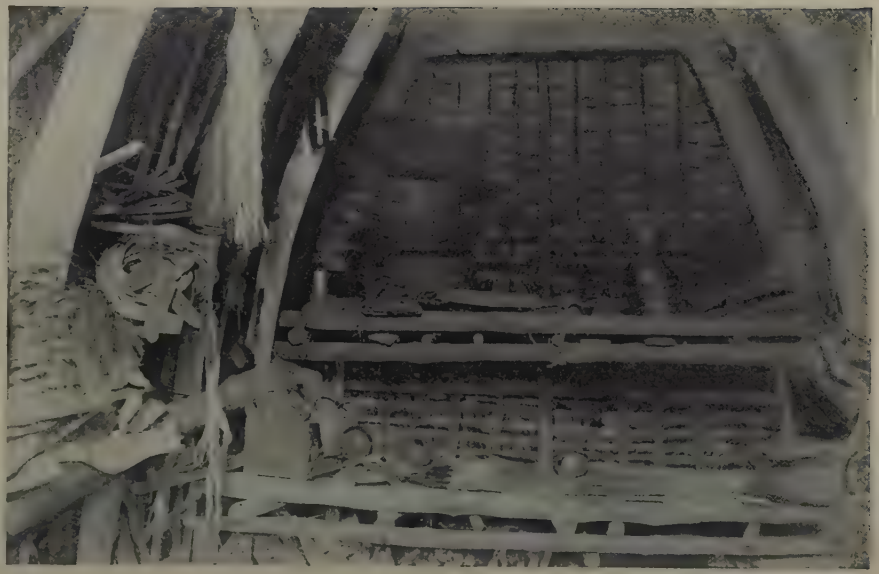
Members of the household are also bound together by community of economic interest. On this point, how-

PLATE 7

A Family on the Road

The woman is carrying large yams in a basket, and the child in a characteristic position on her hip; the man has an adze on his shoulder. The child evidently feels safest clinging to both father and mother.

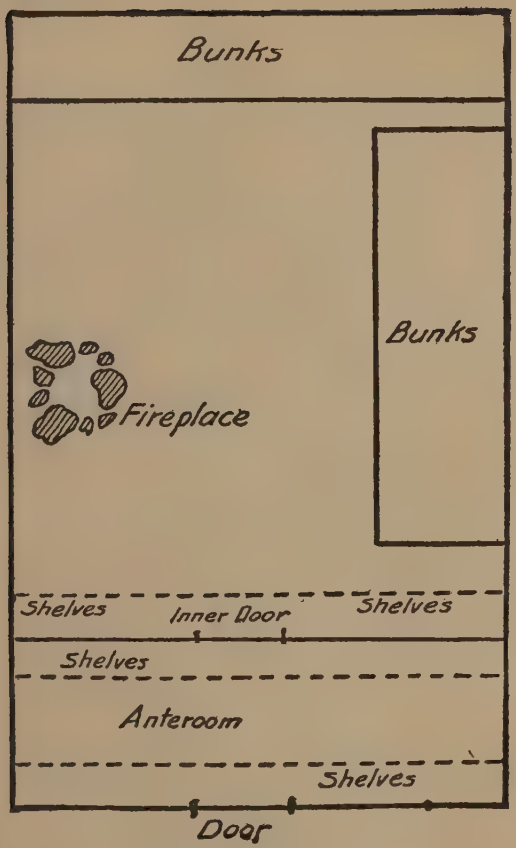
[*Ch. I*, 3]



NATIVE INTERIOR

Two bunks run across the back wall. Besides a Chinese trade trunk and a piece of calico there are water bottles, folded mats and a basket on the lower bunk. On the top bunk, note the lime pot, stuck into the

FIGURE II



PLAN OF A DWELLING HOUSE

[*Ch. I*, 3]

ever, a more detailed statement is necessary, as the subject is important and complicated. To begin with the right of ownership, it must be realized that personal possession is a matter of great importance to the native. The title *toli-* ("owner" or "master," used as a prefix to the object possessed) has a considerable value in itself as conferring a sort of distinction, even when it does not give a claim to rights of exclusive use. This term and the conception of ownership are, in every particular case, very well defined, but the relationship varies with different objects, and it is impossible to summarize it in one formula covering all cases.[1]

It is remarkable that in spite of the close union within the household, domestic utensils and the many objects littering the hut are not owned in common. Husband and wife have each his or her own possessions. The wife owns her grass petticoats, of which there are usually some twelve to twenty in her wardrobe, for use on various occasions. Also she relies on her own skill and industry to procure them. So that in the question of toilet, a Kirwinian lady depends solely upon herself. The water vessels, the implements for dressmaking, a number of articles of personal adornment, are also her own property. The man owns his tools, the axe and adze, the nets, the spears, the dancing ornaments, and the drum, and also those objects of high value, called by the natives *vaygu'a*, which consist of necklaces, belts, armshells, and large polished axe-blades.

Nor is private ownership in this case a mere word

[1] Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, ch. vi, and *passim*.

without practical significance. The husband and the wife can and do dispose of any article of their own property, and after the death of one of them the objects are not inherited by the partner, but distributed among a special class of heirs. When there is a domestic quarrel a man may destroy some of his wife's property—he may wreak his vengeance on the water bottles or on the grass petticoats—and she may smash his drum or break his dancing shield. A man also has to repair and keep his own things in order, so that the woman is not the housekeeper in the general European sense.

Immovable goods, such as garden-land, trees, houses, as well as sailing-vessels, are owned almost exclusively by men, as is also the live stock, which consists mainly of pigs. We shall have to touch on this subject again, when we speak of the social position of women, for ownership of such things goes with power.

Passing now from economic rights to duties, let us consider the partition of work according to sex. In the heavier type of labour, such as gardening, fishing, and carrying of considerable loads, there is a definite division between man and woman. Fishing and hunting, the latter of very slight importance in the Trobriands, are done by men, while only women engage in the search for marine shell-fish. In gardening, the heaviest work, such as cutting the scrub, making fences, fetching the heavy yam supports, and planting the tubers, is done exclusively by men. Weeding is the women's special duty, while some of the intermediate stages, in which the plants have to be looked after, are performed by mixed male and female

labour. Men do such tending as there is to be done of the coco- and areca-nut palms and of the fruit-trees, while it is chiefly the women who look after the pigs.

All oversea expeditions are made by men, and the building of canoes is entirely their business. Men have to do most of the trading, especially the important exchange of vegetable food for fish which takes place between the inland and coastal villagers. In the building of houses, the framework is made by men, and the women help with the thatching. Both sexes share in the carrying of burdens; the men shoulder the heavier ones, while the women make up by carrying more frequently. And, as we have seen, there is a characteristic sexual distinction in the mode of placing the burden.

As regards the minor work of manufacturing small objects, the women have to make the mats and plait the armlets and belts. Of course, they alone fashion their personal dress, just as men have to tailor their own not very extensive but very carefully finished garment, the pubic leaf. Men do the wood carving, even in the case of objects used exclusively by women; they manufacture lime gourds for betel chewing and, in the old days, they used to polish and sharpen all stone implements.

This specialization of work according to sex gives, at certain seasons, a characteristic and picturesque touch to village life. When harvest approaches new skirts of the coloured variety have to be made, ready to wear when the crops are brought in and at the subsequent festivities. Quantities of banana and pandanus leaf are brought to the villages, and are there bleached and toughened at the fire. At night the whole village is bright with the shining

A Stage in Skirt Making

Pandanus leaves are being made tough and supple by heating before a fire. One woman is shaved in sign of mourning.

[*Ch. I*, 4]

DRYING SKIRT FIBRE

The bunches of frayed banana leaves are hung in the sun after having been stained with crimson and pur-

of these fires, at each of which a couple of women sit opposite each other and pass the leaf to and fro in front of the flame (see pl. 9). Loud chatter and song enlivens the work, gay with the anticipation of the coming entertainments. When the material is ready, it has still to be cut, trimmed, and dyed. Two kinds of roots are brought from the bush for the dyeing, one giving a deep purple, and the other a bright crimson. The dye is mixed in large bowls made of giant clam shells; in these the leaf strips are steeped, and then they are hung up in thick bunches to dry in the central place, enlivening the whole village with their gay colour (see pl. 10). After a very complex process of piecing together, a resplendent "creation" results; the golden yellow of the pandanus, the soft hay-green or dun of the banana-leaf, the crimson and purple of the dyed layers form a really beautiful harmony of colour against the smooth, brown skin of the woman.

Some manufactures are carried out by men and women together. Both sexes, for example, take part in the elaborate process which is necessary in preparing certain shell ornaments,[1] while nets and water-vessels may be made by either sex.

It will have been seen, then, that women do not bear the brunt of all the drudgery and hard work. Indeed, the heaviest tasks in the gardens and the most monotonous ones are performed by men. On the other hand, women have their own province in economic activity; it is a conspicuous one, and through it they assert their status and importance.

[1] Cf. ch. xv of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*

CHAPTER II

THE STATUS OF WOMAN IN NATIVE SOCIETY

The ideas of the native concerning kinship and descent, with their assertion of the mother's exclusive part in propagation; the position of woman within the household, and her considerable share in economic life: these imply that woman plays an influential rôle in the community, and that her status cannot be low or unimportant. In this section it will be necessary to consider her legal status and her position in the tribe; that is, her rank, her power, and her social independence of man.

In the first section of the previous chapter we have discussed the kinship ideas of the natives, founded on the matrilineal principle that everything descends through the mother. We have also seen that the real guardianship of her family remains not with herself, but with her brother. This can be generalized into the formula that, in each generation, woman continues the line and man represents it; or, in other words, that the power and functions which belong to a family are vested in the men of each generation, though they have to be transmitted by the women.

I

THE PRIVILEGES AND BURDENS OF RANK

Let us examine some of the consequences of this principle. For the continuation and very existence of the

family, woman as well as man is indispensable; therefore both sexes are regarded by the natives as being of equal value and importance. When you discuss genealogies with a native, the question of continuity of line is constantly considered in relation to the number of women alive. This was noticeable whenever a man of a sub-clan of high rank, such as the Tabalu of Omarakana, discussed the ethnographic census of its members with me: the fact that there was a great number of women would be emphasized with pleasure, and said to be good and important. That there were only two women of that sub-clan of high rank in Omarakana, while there were several male members, was obviously a sore point, and every Tabalu informant volunteered the statement that there were, however, more women in the younger line of Olivilevi, a village in the south of the island also ruled by the Tabalu. A man of any clan would often, in speaking of his family relations, expatiate on the number of his sisters and of their female children as being a matter of real importance to his lineage. Thus girls are quite as welcome at birth as boys, and no difference is made between them by the parents in interest, enthusiasm, or affection. It is needless to add that the idea of female infanticide would be as absurd as abhorrent to the natives.

The general rule that women hand on the privileges of the family and men exercise them, must be examined as it works. When that is done we shall be able to understand the principle better and even to qualify it somewhat. The idea of rank—that is, of an intrinsic, social superiority of certain people as their birthright—is very highly devel-

oped among the Trobriand Islanders; and a consideration of the way in which rank affects the individual will best explain the working of the general principle.

Rank is associated with definite hereditary groups of a totemic nature, which have already been designated here as *sub-clans* (see also ch. xiii, sec. 5). Each sub-clan has a definite rank; it claims to be higher than some, and admits its inferiority to others. Five or six main categories of rank can, broadly speaking, be distinguished, and within these the minor grades are of but small importance. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I shall chiefly concern myself with a comparison of the sub-clan of Tabalu, the highest of all in rank, with its inferiors.

Every village community "belongs to" or is "owned by" one such sub-clan, and the eldest male is the headman of the village. When the sub-clan is of highest rank, its oldest male not only is headman of his own village, but exercises over-rule in a whole district, and is what we have called a chief. Chieftainship and rank are, therefore, closely associated, and rank carries with it, not only social distinction, but also the right to rule. Now, one of these two attributes, but one only, social distinction, is shared by men and women alike. Every woman of the highest rank, that of Tabalu, enjoys all the personal privileges of nobility. The male members of the clan will perhaps say that man is more aristocratic, more *guya'u* than woman, but probably this merely expresses the general assumption of male superiority. In all concrete manifestations of rank, whether traditional or social, the two sexes are equal. In the extensive mythology re-

ferring to the origin of the various sub-clans, a woman ancestress always figures beside the man (her brother), and there are even myths in which a woman alone inaugurates a line.[1]

Another important manifestation of rank is the complex system of taboos, and this is equally binding on man and woman. The taboos of rank include numerous prohibitions in the matter of food, certain animals especially being forbidden, and there are some other notable restrictions, such as that prohibiting the use of any water except from water-holes in the coral ridge. These taboos are enforced by supernatural sanction, and illness follows their breach, even if it be accidental. But the real force by which they are maintained is a strong conviction on the part of the taboo keeper that the forbidden food is intrinsically inferior, that it is disgusting and defiling in itself. When it is suggested to a Tabalu that he should eat of stingaree or bush pig he shows unmistakable signs of repulsion; and cases are quoted in which a man of rank has vomited, with every sign of nausea, some forbidden substance which he had taken unwittingly. A citizen of Omarakana will speak of the stingaree eaters of the lagoon villages with the same disgusted contempt as the right-minded Briton uses towards the frog- and snail-eaters of France, or the European towards the puppy- and rotten-egg-eaters of China.

Now a woman of rank fully shares in this disgust, and in the danger from breaking a taboo. If, as does occasionally happen, she marries a man of lower rank, she

[1] Cf. my *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, ch. ii.

must have all food, all cooking utensils, dishes, and drinking vessels separate from her husband, or else he must forgo all such diet as is taboo to her; the latter is the course more usually adopted.

Rank entitles its possessors to certain ornaments, which serve both as its insignia and as festive decorations. For instance, a certain kind of shell ornament, the red spondylus shell-discs, may only be worn on the forehead and on the occiput by people of the highest rank. As belts and armlets they are also permitted to those next in rank. Again, an armlet on the forearm is a mark of the first aristocracy. Varieties and distinctions in personal adornment are very numerous, but it will be enough to say here that they are observed in exactly the same manner by male and female, though the ornaments are more frequently made use of by the latter.

Certain house decorations, on the other hand, such as carved boards and ornaments of shell (pls. 2, 20, and 23), which are in pattern and material exclusive to the several higher ranks, are primarily made use of by the male representatives. But a woman of rank who marries a commoner would be fully entitled to have them on her house.

The very important and elaborate ceremonial of respect observed towards people of rank is based on the idea that a man of noble lineage must always remain on a physically higher level than his inferiors. In the presence of a noble, all people of lower rank have to bow the head or bend the body or squat on the ground, according to the degree of their inferiority. On no account must any head reach

higher than that of the chief. Tall platforms are always built on to the chief's house, and on one of these he will sit so that the people may freely move below him during tribal gatherings (see pl. 2, where we see the chief leaning against such a platform). When a commoner passes a group of nobles seated on the ground, even at a distance, he has to call out *tokay* ("arise"), and the chiefs immediately scramble to their feet and remain standing while he crouches past them.[1] One would think that so uncomfortable a ceremonial of homage would have been circumvented in some way; but this is not the case. Many times when I was sitting in the village in conversation with the chief, a commoner would pass through the village grove, and call out *tokay*, and though this would happen every quarter of an hour or so, my friend had to rise while the other, bending low, walked slowly by.[2]

Women of rank enjoy exactly the same privilege in this matter. When a noblewoman is married to a commoner, her husband has to bend before her in public, and others have to be still more careful to do so. A high platform is erected for her and she sits upon it alone at tribal assemblies, while her husband moves or squats below with the rest of the crowd.

[1] *Tokay*, as noun, also means "commoner." The noun is perhaps derived etymologically from the verb.

[2] When To'uluwa, the paramount chief of the Trobriands, was put in jail by the resident magistrate, the latter, mostly, I am afraid, because he wanted to humiliate his native rival, forbade the commoners incarcerated with the chief to crouch before him. In spite of this, I have been told on good authority by several eye-witnesses that all the commoners in jail did constantly move bending, except when the white satrap appeared upon the scene. This is an example of the short-sighted policy of the typical white official, who thinks that his authority can only be maintained at the expense of the native chiefs, and thus undermines native tribal law and introduces a spirit of anarchy.

The sanctity of the chief's person is particularly localized in his head, which is surrounded by a halo of strict taboos. More especially sacred are the forehead and the occiput with the neck. Only equals in rank, the wives and a few particularly privileged persons, are allowed to touch these parts, for purposes of cleaning, shaving, ornamentation, and delousing. This sanctity of the head extends to the female members of the noble sub-clans, and if a noblewoman marries a commoner, her brow, her occiput her neck and shoulders, should not—in theory at least—be touched by the husband even during the most intimate phases of conjugal life.

Thus in myth, in the observation of taboo, and in the ceremonial of bending, the woman enjoys exactly the same privileges of rank as the man; but she never exercises the actual power associated with it. No woman is ever the head of any sub-clan, and thus she cannot be a chieftainess. What would happen should there be no male members in a given generation I cannot say, for there are no actual cases of this on record; but the interim regency of a woman seems by no means incompatible with the ideas of the Trobrianders. But, as we shall see later on (ch. v, sec. 4), the privilege of polygamy is the foundation of a chief's or headman's power, and women, of course, have no such similar privilege of polyandry.

Many other social functions of rank are directly exercised by men alone, the women participating only in the social prestige. Thus ownership of canoes, for instance, is vested in the headman—though all the villagers enjoy definite rights in them—but his kinswomen only have

he benefit of the renown (*butura*), that is, the privilege of talking in proprietary terms of the canoes and of boasting about them.[1] Only in exceptional cases do they accompany their men-folk on oversea expeditions. Again, all sorts of rights, privileges, and activities connected with the *kula*, a special system of exchange in valuables, are the prerogatives of men. The woman, whether the man's wife or sister, is only occasionally drawn personally into the matter. For the most part she but basks in reflected glory and satisfaction. In war, men have the field of action entirely to themselves, though the women witness all the preparations and preliminary ceremonies, and even take an occasional peep at the battlefield itself.[2]

It is important to note that in this section, when comparing the parts played by the sexes, we have had quite as often to set the brother and sister side by side as the husband and wife. Within the matrilineal order, the brother and the sister are the naturally linked representatives of the male and female principle respectively in all legal and customary matters. In the myths concerning the origin of families, the brother and sister emerge together from underground, through the original hole in the earth. In family matters, the brother is the natural guardian and head of his sister's household, and of her children. In tribal usage, their respective duties and obligations are strictly regulated, and these form, as we shall see, one of

[1] These questions have been discussed in detail in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, ch. iv, secs. iv and v, and ch. xi, sec. ii. Cf. also ch. vi of that book, and *Crime and Custom*.

[2] For a full description of the *kula*, see *Argonauts;* fighting has been described in the article on "War and Weapons Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands," *Man*, 1920.

the main strands in the social fabric. But in their personal relations the strictest taboo divides brother from sister—and prevents any sort of intimacy between them.[1]

As woman is debarred from the exercise of power, land ownership, and many other public privileges, it follows that she has no place at tribal gatherings and no voice in such public deliberations as are held in connection with gardening, fishing, hunting, oversea expeditions, war, ceremonial trade, festivities and dances.

2

MORTUARY RITES AND FESTIVITIES

On the other hand, there are certain ceremonial and festive activities in connection with which women have a great deal both to say and to do. The most important of these in solemnity and sanctity, as well as the most imposing in display and extent, are the mortuary ceremonies. In the tending of the corpse, the parade of grief, the burial with its manifold rites and long series of ceremonial food distributions: in all these activities, which begin immediately after the death of any important tribesman and continue at intervals for months or even years afterwards, women play a large part and have their own definite duties to fulfil. Certain women, standing in a special relationship to the deceased, have to hold the corpse on their knees, and fondle it; and while the corpse is tended in the hut, another category of female relatives performs a remarkable rite of mourning outside: a number

[1] Cf. ch. xiii, sec. 6, and ch. xiv.

of them, some in couples facing each other and some singly, move in a slow dance, forwards and backwards across the central place, to the rhythm of the wailing dirge (see pl. 11). As a rule, each of them carries in her hand some object worn or possessed by the deceased. Such relics play a great part in mourning and are worn by the women for a long time after their bereavement. The wrapping up of the corpse and the subsequent vigil over the grave is the duty of yet another category of the dead man's womenkind.

Some functions of burial, notably the gruesome custom of cutting up the corpse, are performed by men. In the long period of mourning which follows, the burden of the dramatic expression of grief falls mostly on the women; a widow always mourns longer than a widower, a mother longer than a father, a female relative longer than a male of the same degree. In the mortuary distributions of food and wealth, based on the idea that the members of the deceased's sub-clan give payment to the other relatives for their share in the mourning, women play a conspicuous rôle, and conduct some parts of the ceremonial distributions themselves (see pl. 12).

I have barely touched on the mortuary ceremonies, as we shall have to return to them presently (ch. vi, secs. 3 and 4), but I have said enough to show how large a share women take in this class of religious or ceremonial display. Some tribal ceremonies in which women alone are active will be described in detail later, and it is only necessary here to state briefly that in the long and complicated ceremonial of first pregnancy (ch. viii, secs. 1 and

2) and in the rites of beauty magic at festivities (ch. xi, secs. 2-4) women are the main actors. On certain occasions, such as first pregnancy ritual and the first appearance after childbirth, as well as at big tribal dances and *kayasa* (competitive displays), women appear in full dress and decoration (pl. 13), which correspond to the men's full festive attire (as seen on pls. 14 and 79).

An interesting incident occurs during the *milamala*, the annual season of dancing and feasting held after the harvest. This period is inaugurated by a ceremony, the principal aim of which is to break the taboo on drums. In this initial feast there is a distribution of food, and the men, adorned in full dancing attire, range themselves for the performance, the drummers and the singers in the centre of a ring formed by the decorated dancers. As in a normal dance, standing in the central place, the singers intone a chant, the dancers begin to move slowly and the drummers to beat time. But they are not allowed to proceed: almost at the first throb of the drums, there breaks forth from inside the huts the wailing of those women who are still in mourning; from behind the inner row of houses, a crowd of shrieking, agitated female figures rush out and attack the dancers, beat them with sticks, and throw coconuts, stones, and pieces of wood at them. The men are not bound by custom to display too considerable courage and in a trice the drummers, who had so solemnly initiated the performance, have entirely disappeared; and the village lies empty, for the women pursue the fugitives. But the taboo is broken and, on the

THE MORTUARY DANCE

Held at Oburaku after the death of Ineykoya. Compare plate 33.

[*Ch. II, 2; also ch. VI, 3*]

DISTRIBUTION OF SKIRTS IN MORTUARY RITUAL

[*Ch. II, 2*]

afternoon of the same day, the first undisturbed dance of the festivities is held.

In full dress dancing (see pls. 14, 58, 65, 73, 82), it is mainly the men who display their beauty and skill. In some dances, such as those performed in a quick tempo with carved dancing boards or with bunches of streamers or in conventionalized imitation of animals, men alone may participate (pls. 65, 73, 82). Only in one traditional type of dance, for which men put on the fibre petticoats of the female (see pls. 3, 58), are women not debarred by custom from participation. But though I witnessed scores of performances of this type, I only once saw a womanly actually dance, and she was of the very highest rank. As passive witnesses and admirers, however, women form a very important adjunct to this form of display.

There are many other long, continuous periods of amusement in the Trobriands besides the dancing season, and in these women take a more active share. The nature of the amusement is fixed in advance, and has to remain the same during the whole period. There are different kinds of *kayasa,* as these entertainments are called (see ch. ix, secs. 2-4). There is a *kayasa* in which, evening after evening, groups of women, festively adorned, sit on mats and sing; in another, men and women, wearing wreaths and garlands of flowers, exchange such ornaments with each other; or a *kayasa* is announced, the main theme of which is a general daily display of a certain type of ornament. Sometimes the members of a community prepare small toy sailing canoes and hold a miniature regatta

daily on shallow water. There can be also a *kayasa* of erotic pastimes. Some of these entertainments are exclusively feminine (singing and certain ornaments); in others both sexes participate (flowers, erotics, and hair decoration); in others only men (the toy canoes).

In all the public festivals and entertainments, whether women take an active part or no, they are never excluded from looking on or freely mixing with the men; and this they do on terms of perfect equality, exchanging banter and jokes with them and engaging in easy conversation.

3

WOMAN'S SHARE IN MAGIC

One aspect of public life is very important to the Trobriander and stands apart as something peculiar and specific. The native sets on one side a certain category of facts, one type of human behaviour, and designates these by the word *megwa*, which may be quite adequately translated as "magic." Magic is very intimately associated with economic life and indeed with every vital concern; it is also an instrument of power and an index of the importance of those who practise it. The position of women in magic deserves therefore very special consideration.

Magic constitutes a particular aspect of reality. In all important activities and enterprises in which man has not the issue firmly and safely in hand, magic is deemed indispensable. Thus appeal is made to it in gardening and fishing, in building a large canoe, and in diving for valuable shell, in the regulation of wind and weather, in

war, in matters of love and personal attraction, in securing safety at sea and the success of any great enterprise; and, last but not least, in health and for the infliction of ailments upon an enemy. Success and safety in all these matters is largely and sometimes entirely dependent upon magic, and can be controlled by its proper application. Fortune or failure, dearth or plenty, health or disease are felt and believed to be mainly due to the right magic rightly applied in the right circumstances.

Magic consists of spells and rites performed by a man who is entitled by the fulfilment of several conditions to perform them. Magical power resides primarily in the words of the formula, and the function of the rite, which is as a rule very simple, is mainly to convey the magician's breath, charged with the power of the words, to the object or person to be affected. All magical spells are believed to have descended unchanged from time immemorial, from the beginning of things.

This last point has its sociological corollary; several systems of magic are hereditary, each in a special sub-clan, and such a system has been possessed by that sub-clan since the time it came out from underground. It can only be performed by a member, and is, of course, one of the valued attributes and possessions of the sub-clan itself. It is handed on in the female line, though usually, as with other forms of power and possession, it is exercised by men alone. But in a few cases such hereditary magic can also be practised by women.

The power given by magic to its performer is not due merely to the effects of its specific influence. In the most

important types of magic the rites are intimately interwoven with the activities which they accompany and are not merely superimposed upon them. Thus, in garden magic, the officiator plays an economically and socially important rôle and is the organizer and director of the work. It is the same in the building of a canoe and its magic, and in the rites associated with the conduct of an oversea expedition: the man who technically directs and is the leader of the enterprise has also the duty or privilege of performing the magic.[1] Both functions, the directive and the magical, are indivisibly united in the same person. In other types of magic, which are placed by the natives in the category of *bulubwalata* (black magic)—and this comprises all sorcery and, among others, the charms for drought or rain—the practitioner has an immense and direct influence over other tribesmen. Magic is indeed by far the most efficient and frequently used instrument of power.

As magic is so intimately bound up with the activity which it accompanies, it is clear that, in certain types of occupation, the division of functions between the sexes will involve a corresponding division in magical performance. Those types of work which customarily only men perform will demand a man as officiating magician; where women are occupied with their own business, the magician must be female. Thus, looking at the table given below, we see that in fishing and hunting, as well as in wood carving, activities in which no woman ever participates, magic is exclusively practised by men. War

[1] Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, esp. chs. iv, v, vii, and xvii.

magic, too, which is now in abeyance, was an hereditary system of spells and rites always practised by a man of a certain sub-clan. The long and complex series of spells which accompany the building of a sea-going canoe can never be made by a woman, and, as no woman ever goes on a ceremonial overseas expedition, the magic of safety and of *kula* which then has to be performed can only be done by a man.

DIVISION OF MAGIC BETWEEN THE SEXES

Male	*Female*	*Mixed*
Public garden magic (*Towosi*)	Rites of first pregnancy	Beauty magic
Fishing	Skirt making	Love magic
Hunting	Prevention of dangers at birth	Private garden magic
Canoe building	Toothache	
Magic of *kula* (*Mwasila*)	Elephantiasis, swellings	
Weather (sun and rain)	Affections of the genitals with discharge (Gonorrhœa?)	
Wind	Abortion	
War magic (*Boma*)	Female witchcraft (*Yoyova* or *Mulukwausi*)	
Safety at sea (*Kayga'u*)		
Wood carving (*Kabitam*)		
Sorcery (*Bwaga'u*)		

Again there are some important types of magic which are obviously adapted to female hands and lips, for they are attached to activities or functions which by their nature or by social convention exclude the presence of men. Such is the magic associated with the ceremony of first pregnancy (see ch. viii, secs. 1 and 2); the magic of the expert which gives skill in the manufacture of fibre petticoats; and the magic of abortion.

There are, however, mixed spheres of activity and in-

fluence, such as gardening or love-making, the control of the weather or human health, where at first glance there appears to be no association with one sex rather than the other. Yet garden magic is invariably a man's concern and women never perform the important public rites, most scrupulously observed and highly valued by the natives, which are carried out by the village magician over the gardens of the whole community.[1] Even those phases of gardening, such as weeding, which are undertaken exclusively by women, have to be inaugurated by the male garden magician in an official ceremony. Wind, sunshine, and rain are also controlled entirely by male hands and mouths.

In certain mixed activities a man or a woman can equally well perform the required magic, and some minor rites of private garden magic, used by each individual for his or her own benefit, can be carried out indiscriminately by men or women. There is the magic of love and beauty, of which the spells are recited by anyone who suffers from unrequited love or needs to enhance his or her personal charm. Again, on certain occasions, such, for instance, as the big tribal festivals, the spells of beauty are publicly recited by women over men (ch. xi, sec. 3), and, at other times, men apply a form of beauty magic to their own persons and ornaments.[2]

The most definite allocation of magical powers to one

[1] In the Amphlett Islands, on the other hand, garden magic is made mainly if not exclusively by women. Among the natives of Dobu Island and on the north-eastern shores of Dawson Straits in the d'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, women also play a preponderating rôle in garden magic.

[2] Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* ch. xiii, sec. i.

PLATE 13

DECORATED WOMEN

[*Ch. II, 2*]

MEN IN FULL FESTIVE ATTIRE

or other of the sexes is to be found in the dark and dreaded forces of sorcery: those forces which most profoundly affect human hope and happiness. The magic of illness and health, which can poison life or restore its natural sweetness, and which holds death as it were for its last card, can be made by men and women alike; but its character changes entirely with the sex of the practitioner. Man and woman have each their own sorcery, carried on by means of different rites and formulæ, acting in a different manner on the victim's body and surrounded by an altogether different atmosphere of belief. Male sorcery is much more concrete, and its methods can be stated clearly, almost as a rational system. The sorcerer's supernatural equipment is restricted to his power of vanishing at will, of emitting a shining glow from his person, and of having accomplices among the nocturnal birds. Extremely poor means of supernatural action if we compare them with the achievements of a witch!

A witch—and be it remembered that she is always a real woman and not a spiritual or non-human being—goes out on her nightly errand in the form of an invisible double; she can fly through the air and appears as a falling star; she assumes at will the shape of a fire-fly, of a night bird or of a flying-fox; she can hear and smell at enormous distances; she is endowed with sarcophagous propensities, and feeds on corpses.

The disease which witches cause is almost incurable and extremely rapid in its action, killing, as a rule, immediately. It is inflicted by the removal of the victim's inside, which the woman presently consumes. The wizard, on

the other hand, never partakes of his victim's flesh, his power is much less effective, he must proceed slowly, and the best he can hope for is to inflict a lingering disease, which may, with good luck, kill after months or years of steady labour. Even then another sorcerer can be hired to counteract his work and restore the patient. But there is little chance of combating a witch, even if the help of another witch be sought immediately.

A witch, when she is not old, is no less desirable sexually than other women. Indeed, she is surrounded by a halo of glory due to her personal power, and usually she has also that strong individuality which seems to accompany the reputation for witchcraft. The attraction which a marriageable young witch has for the other sex need not be altogether disinterested, for witchcraft is occasionally a source of income and of personal influence in which it is pleasant to have a share. But the profession of witch, unlike that of sorcerer, is not exercised openly; a witch may receive payment for healing, but she never undertakes to kill for a fee. In this again she differs from the sorcerer who derives the greater part of his income from black rather than from curative practice. Indeed, even when a woman is generally known to be a witch, she is never supposed to admit it explicitly, even to her husband.

Witchcraft is inherited from mother to daughter, and an early initiation has to take place. In later life, the art of female necromancy is sometimes further enhanced by less reputable means. Some women are said to have sexual relations with non-human, highly malignant beings

called *tauva'u* who bring epidemics and various evils upon the people (see ch. xii, sec. 4). By them they are further instructed in the art of harming, and such women are greatly feared. Several of my personal acquaintance were definitely pointed out as having a leman from the sphere of *tauva'u*, notably the wife of the headman of Obweria, a very intelligent and enterprising character, who is seen, as the main performer, on plates 77 and 78.

From the point of view of the investigating sociologist, the most important difference between male and female sorcery lies in the fact that the wizard actually carries on his trade, while the witch's activity exists only in folk-lore and in the imagination of the native. That is to say, a sorcerer actually knows the magic of his trade; when called upon he will utter it over the proper substances; will go out at night to waylay his victim or visit him in his hut; and in certain cases, I suspect, may even administer poison. The witch, on the other hand, however much she may be believed to play the part of a *yoyoya*, does not—needless to say—really fly or abstract the insides of people, and she knows no spells or rites, since this type of female magic lives merely in legend and fiction.

There are a number of minor ailments, among them toothache, certain tumours, swelling of the testicles and genital discharge (gonorrhœa?), which woman can inflict on man by means of magic. Toothache is exclusively a female specialty, and one woman will be called in to cure it when some other has caused it. A witch can produce it through her magical power over a small beetle

called *kim*, which is very similar to the one which makes holes in taro. The resemblance between dental caries and the cavities bored by the beetle in taro is a sufficient proof that similar effects have been produced by similar causes. But some of my informants had actually seen the small black scarab fall out of a man's mouth while a woman was performing the curative formula.

There are, as we have seen, forms of hereditary magic which can be carried on only by male members of a sub-clan, or, exceptionally, by the son of such a member. (And in the latter case he has to relinquish it at his father's death.) Now, if the males of a certain generation were to die out, a woman could learn such magic, though she would not be allowed to practise it, and when she bore a male heir to her sub-clan, would teach him the formula for his future use. Thus woman can tide over the gap of one generation, carrying in her memory a system of garden magic, or weather and wind charms, or spells for fishing, hunting, canoe building, and oversea trade. She can even preserve a system of war magic, but she must never learn the formula of masculine sorcery, which is strictly taboo to the female sex. Nor is there any necessity for her to do so, since this magic is never strictly hereditary within a sub-clan.

Thus we see that the strong tribal position of women is also buttressed by their right to exercise magic—that toughest and least destructible substance of belief.

And now, in order to summarize briefly the results of this chapter and the previous one, let us imagine that we

are taking a bird's-eye view of a native village, and are trying to form a compound moving picture of the life of the community. Casting our glance over the central place, the street, and the surrounding grove and garden land, we see them peopled by men and women mixing freely and on terms of equality. Sometimes they go together to work in the garden, or to collect food-stuffs in the jungle or on the sea-shore. Or else they separate, each sex forming a group of workers engaged in some special activity, and performing it efficiently and with interest. Men predominate on the central place, discussing, perhaps, in a communal gathering the prospects of the garden, or preparing for an oversea expedition or for some ceremony. The street is peopled by women, busying themselves with household work, and there the men will presently join them, helping them to amuse the children or in some domestic task. We can hear the women scold their husbands, usually in a very good-natured manner.

Let us suppose our attention to be drawn to some singular event, to a death, a tribal squabble, a division of inherited wealth, or to some ceremony. We watch it with understanding eyes, and see, side by side, the workings of tribal law and custom, and the play of personal passion and interest. We see the influence of matrilineal principles, the working of paternal rule, usages of tribal authority, and the results of totemic division in the clans and sub-clans. In all this there is a balance between the influence of male and female, the man wields the power while the woman determines its distribution.

Or perhaps the central place is thronged by a mixed gathering, gay with festive dress and decorations. Women move with a soft swaying motion in their holiday attire, coquettishly aware of the lines of their bodies and the elegant swish-swish of their full, crimson, purple, and golden skirts. The men are more soberly dressed, and affect a stiff, immovable dignity. They move very little, unless they are among the performers in the dance or other festive function. These last are covered gorgeously with ornaments, and are instinct with life and motion. The performance starts; it is carried on sometimes by men only, and sometimes by women. As it progresses, later in the afternoon or in the evening, the young men and women begin to show some interest in each other: here and there snatches of conversation, bursts of laughter and giggling can be heard. Nothing in the slightest degree obscene, indecent, or sexually improper can be observed in their behaviour, though their vocabulary is by no means prim. But, since we understand this community, we know that assignations are being made and intrigues inaugurated. Thus we are led up to the closer study of the erotic phase of native life; and we now proceed to a systematic description of this subject.

CHAPTER III

PRENUPTIAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE SEXES

The Trobrianders are very free and easy in their sexual relations. To a superficial observer it might indeed appear that they are entirely untrammelled in these. This, however, is not the case; for their liberty has certain very well-defined limits. The best way of showing this will be to give a consecutive account of the various stages through which a man and a woman pass from childhood to maturity—a sort of sexual life-history of a representative couple.

We shall have first to consider their earliest years, for these natives begin their acquaintance with sex at a very tender age. The unregulated and, as it were, capricious intercourse of these early years becomes systematized in adolescence into more or less stable intrigues, which later on develop into permanent liaisons. Connected with these latter stages of sexual life, there exists in the Trobriand Islands an extremely interesting institution, the bachelors' and unmarried girls' house, called by the natives *bukumatula;* it is of considerable importance, as it is one of those arrangements sanctioned by custom which might appear on the surface to be a form of "group-marriage."

I

THE SEXUAL LIFE OF CHILDREN

Children in the Trobriand Islands enjoy considerable freedom and independence. They soon become emancipated from a parental tutelage which has never been very strict. Some of them obey their parents willingly, but this is entirely a matter of the personal character of both parties: there is no idea of a regular discipline, no system of domestic coercion. Often as I sat among them, observing some family incident or listening to a quarrel between parent and child, I would hear a youngster told to do this or that, and generally the thing, whatever it was, would be asked as a favour, though sometimes the request might be backed up by a threat of violence. The parents would either coax or scold or ask as from one equal to another. A simple command, implying the expectation of natural obedience, is never heard from parent to child in the Trobriands.

People will sometimes grow angry with their children and beat them in an outburst of rage; but I have quite as often seen a child rush furiously at his parent and strike him. This attack might be received with a good-natured smile, or the blow might be angrily returned; but the idea of definite retribution, or of coercive punishment, is not only foreign, but distinctly repugnant to the native. Several times, when I suggested, after some flagrant infantile misdeed, that it would mend matters for the future if the child were beaten or otherwise pun-

CHILDREN SHOWING A GAME TO THE ETHNOGRAPHER

[*Ch. III*, 1]

THE CHILDREN'S REPUBLIC

Sometimes in the course of an ethnographic demonstration a general discussion breaks out, which is

ished in cold blood, the idea appeared unnatural and immoral to my friends, and was rejected with some resentment.

Such freedom gives scope for the formation of the children's own little community, an independent group, into which they drop naturally from the age of four or five and continue till puberty. As the mood prompts them, they remain with their parents during the day, or else join their playmates for a time in their small republic (see pls. 15, 16, and 17). And this community within a community acts very much as its own members determine, standing often in a sort of collective opposition to its elders. If the children make up their minds to do a certain thing, to go for a day's expedition, for instance, the grown-ups and even the chief himself, as I often observed, will not be able to stop them. In my ethnographic work I was able and was indeed forced to collect my information about children and their concerns directly from them. Their spiritual ownership in games and childish activities was acknowledged, and they were also quite capable of instructing me and explaining the intricacies of their play or enterprise (see pl. 15).

Small children begin also to understand and to defer to tribal tradition and custom; to those restrictions which have the character of a taboo or of a definite command of tribal law, or usage or propriety.[1]

[1] The processes by which respect for tribal taboo and tradition is instilled in the child are described throughout this book, especially in ch. xiii. Custom must not be personified nor is its authority absolute or autonomous, but it is derived from specific social and psychological mechanisms. Cf. my *Crime and Custom,* 1926.

The child's freedom and independence extend also to sexual matters. To begin with, children hear of and witness much in the sexual life of their elders. Within the house, where the parents have no possibility of finding privacy, a child has opportunities of acquiring practical information concerning the sexual act. I was told that no special precautions are taken to prevent children from witnessing their parents' sexual enjoyment. The child would merely be scolded and told to cover its head with a mat. I sometimes heard a little boy or girl praised in these terms: "Good child, he never tells what happens between his parents." Young children are allowed to listen to baldly sexual talk, and they understand perfectly well what is being discussed. They are also themselves tolerably expert in swearing and the use of obscene language. Because of their early mental development some quite tiny children are able to make smutty jokes, and these their elders will greet with laughter.

Small girls follow their fathers on fishing expeditions, during which the men remove their pubic leaf. Nakedness under these conditions is regarded as natural, since it is necessary. There is no lubricity or ribaldry associated with it. Once, when I was engaged in the discussion of an obscene subject, a little girl, the daughter of one of my informants, joined our group. I asked the father to tell her to go away. "Oh, no," he answered, "she is a good girl, she never repeats to her mother anything that is said among men. When we take her fishing with us we need not be ashamed. Another girl would describe the details of our nakedness to her companions

or her mothers.[1] Then these will chaff us and repeat what they have heard about us. This little girl never says a word." The other men present enthusiastically assented, and developed the theme of the girl's discretion. But a boy is much less in contact with his mother in such matters, for here, between maternal relations, that is, for the natives, between real kindred, the taboo of incest begins to act at an early age, and the boy is removed from any intimate contact of this sort with his mother and above all with his sisters.

There are plenty of opportunities for both boys and girls to receive instruction in erotic matters from their companions. The children initiate each other into the mysteries of sexual life in a directly practical manner at a very early age. A premature amorous existence begins among them long before they are able really to carry out the act of sex. They indulge in plays and pastimes in which they satisfy their curiosity concerning the appearance and function of the organs of generation, and incidentally receive, it would seem, a certain amount of positive pleasure. Genital manipulation and such minor perversions as oral stimulation of the organs are typical forms of this amusement. Small boys and girls are said to be frequently initiated by their somewhat older companions, who allow them to witness their own amorous dalliance. As they are untrammelled by the authority of their elders and unrestrained by any moral code, except that of specific tribal taboo, there is nothing but their de-

[1] That is, "classificatory mothers," mother, maternal aunts, etc. Cf. ch. xiii, secs. 5 and 6.

gree of curiosity, of ripeness, and of "temperament" or sensuality, to determine how much or how little they shall indulge in sexual pastimes.

The attitude of the grown-ups and even of the parents towards such infantile indulgence is either that of complete indifference or that of complacency—they find it natural, and do not see why they should scold or interfere. Usually they show a kind of tolerant and amused interest, and discuss the love affairs of their children with easy jocularity. I often heard some such benevolent gossip as this: "So-and-so (a little girl) has already had intercourse with So-and-so (a little boy)." And if such were the case, it would be added that it was her first experience. An exchange of lovers, or some small love drama in the little world would be half-seriously, half-jokingly discussed. The infantile sexual act, or its substitute, is regarded as an innocent amusement. "It is their play to *kayta* (to have intercourse). They give each other a coconut, a small piece of betel-nut, a few beads or some fruits from the bush, and then they go and hide, and *kayta*." But it is not considered proper for the children to carry on their affairs in the house. It has always to be done in the bush.

The age at which a girl begins to amuse herself in this manner is said to coincide with her putting on the small fibre skirt, between, that is, the ages of four and five. But this obviously can refer only to incomplete practices and not to the real act. Some of my informants insisted that such small female children actually have intercourse with penetration. Remembering, however, the Trobri-

ander's very strong tendency to exaggerate in the direction of the grotesque, a tendency not altogether devoid of a certain malicious Rabelaisian humour, I am inclined to discount those statements of my authorities. If we place the beginning of real sexual life at the age of six to eight in the case of girls, and ten to twelve in the case of boys, we shall probably not be erring very greatly in either direction. And from these times sexuality will gradually assume a greater and greater importance as life goes on, until it abates in the course of nature.

Sexual, or at least sensuous, pleasure constitutes if not the basis of, at least an element in, many of the children's pastimes. Some of them do not, of course, provide any sexual excitement at all, as for instance those in imitation of the grown-up economic and ceremonial activities (see pl. 17), or games of skill or childish athletics; but all sorts of round games, which are played by the children of both sexes on the central place of the village, have a more or less strongly marked flavour of sex, though the outlets they furnish are indirect and only accessible to the elder youths and maidens, who also join in them. Indeed, we shall have to return later (chs. ix and xi) to a consideration of sex in certain games, songs, and stories, for as the sexual association becomes more subtle and indirect it appeals more and more to older people alone and has, therefore, to be examined in the contexts of later life.

There are, however, some specific games in which the older children never participate, and into which sex directly enters. The little ones sometimes play, for in-

stance, at house-building, and at family life. A small hut of sticks and boughs is constructed in a secluded part of the jungle, and a couple or more repair thither and play at husband and wife, prepare food and carry out or imitate as best they can the act of sex. Or else a band of them, in imitation of the amorous expeditions of their elders, carry food to some favourite spot on the sea-shore or in the coral ridge, cook and eat vegetables there, and "when they are full of food, the boys sometimes fight with each other, or sometimes *kayta* (copulate) with the girls." When the fruit ripens on certain wild trees in the jungle they go in parties to pick it, to exchange presents, make *kula* (ceremonial exchange) of the fruit, and engage in erotic pastimes.[1]

Thus it will be seen that they have a tendency to palliate the crudity of their sexual interest and indulgence by associating it with something more poetic. Indeed, the Trobriand children show a great sense of the singular and romantic in their games. For instance, if a part of the jungle or village has been flooded by rain, they go and sail their small canoes on this new water; or if a very strong sea has thrown up some interesting flotsam, they proceed to the beach and inaugurate some imaginative game around it. The little boys, too, search for unusual animals, insects, or flowers, and give them to the little girls, thus lending a redeeming æsthetic touch to their premature eroticisms.

In spite of the importance of the sexual motive in the

[1] For a description of the real *kula*, cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*

SMALL BOYS PLAYING AT "SAGALI"

The ceremonial distributions (sagali) *are of great importance in native life; they arouse the ambition and passion of the adult and appeal to the imagination of children.*

life of the youngest generation, it must be kept in mind that the separation of the sexes, in many matters, obtains also among children. Small girls can very often be seen playing or wandering in independent parties by themselves. Little boys in certain moods—and these seem their more usual ones—scorn the society of the female and amuse themselves alone (pl. 17). Thus the small republic falls into two distinct groups which are perhaps to be seen more often apart than together; and, though they frequently unite in play, this need by no means be necessarily sensuous.

It is important to note that there is no interference by older persons in the sexual life of children. On rare occasions some old man or woman is suspected of taking a strong sexual interest in the children, and even of having intercourse with some of them. But I never found such suspicions supported even by a general consensus of opinion, and it was always considered both improper and silly for an older man or woman to have sexual dealings with a child. There is certainly no trace of any custom of ceremonial defloration by old men, or even by men belonging to an older age class.

2

AGE DIVISIONS

I have just used the expression "age class," but I did so in a broad sense only: for there are no sharply distinguished age grades or classes among the Trobriand natives. The following table of age designations only

roughly indicates the stages of their life; for these stages in practice merge into one another.

DESIGNATIONS OF AGE

1. *Waywaya* (fœtus; infant till the age of crawling, both male and female) 2. *Pwapwawa* (infant, till the stage of walking, male or female) 3. *Gwadi* (child, till puberty, male or female) 4. *Monagwadi* (male child)	4. *Inagwadi* (female child)	I. Stage: *Gwadi*—Word used as a generic designation for all these stages 1–4, meaning *child*, male or female, at any time between birth and maturity
5. *To'ulatile* (youth from puberty till marriage)	5. *Nakapugula* or *Nakubukwabuya* (girl from puberty till marriage)	II. Stage: Generic designations — *Ta'u* (man), *Vivila* (woman)
6. *Tobubowa'u* (mature man) 6a. *Tovavaygile* (married man)	6. *Nabubowa'u* (ripe woman) 6a. *Navavaygile* (married woman)	
7. *Tomwaya* (old man) 7a. *Toboma* (old honoured man)	7. *Numwaya* (old woman)	III. Stage: Old age

The terms used in this table will be found to overlap in some instances. Thus a very small infant may be referred to as *waywaya* or *pwapwawa* indiscriminately, but only the former term as a rule would be used in speaking of a fœtus or referring to the pre-incarnated children from Tuma.[1] Again, you might call a few months old child either *gwadi* or *pwapwawa*, but the latter term would be but seldom used except for a very small baby. The term *gwadi* moreover can be used generically, as "child" in English, to denote anything from a fœtus to a young boy or girl. Thus, it will be seen that two terms may encroach on each other's field of meaning, but only

[1] Cf. ch. vii, sec. 2.

if they be consecutive. The terms with sex prefixes (4) are normally used only of elder children who may be distinguished by their dress.

There are, besides these more specific subdivisions, the three main distinctions of age, between the ripe man and woman in the full vigour of life and the two stages—those of childhood and of old age—which limit manhood and womanhood on either side. The second main stage is divided into two parts, mainly by the fact of marriage. Thus, the words under (5) primarily designate unmarried people and to that extent are opposed to (6*a*), but they also imply youthfulness or unripeness, and in that respect are opposed to (6).

The male term for old age, *tomwaya* (7) can also denote rank or importance. I myself was often so addressed, but I was not flattered, and much preferred to be called *toboma* (literally "the tabooed man"), a name given to old men of rank, but stressing the latter attribute rather than the former. Curiously enough, the compliment or distinction implied in the word *tomwaya* becomes much weaker, and almost disappears in its feminine equivalent. *Numwaya* conveys that tinge of scorn or ridicule inseparable from "old woman" in so many languages.

3

THE AMOROUS LIFE OF ADOLESCENCE

When a boy reaches the age of from twelve to fourteen years, and attains that physical vigour which comes with sexual maturity, and when, above all, his increased

strength and mental ripeness allow him to take part, though still in a somewhat limited and fitful manner, in some of the economic activities of his elders, he ceases to be regarded as a child (*gwadi*), and assumes the position of adolescent (*ulatile* or *to'ulatile*). At the same time he receives a different status, involving some duties and many privileges, a stricter observance of taboos, and a greater participation in tribal affairs. He has already donned the pubic leaf for some time; now he becomes more careful in his wearing of it, and more interested in its appearance. The girl emerges from childhood into adolescence through the obvious bodily changes: "her breasts are round and full; her bodily hair begins to grow; her menses flow and ebb with every moon," as the natives put it. She also has no new change in her attire to make, for she has much earlier assumed her fibre skirt, but now her interest in it from the two points of view of elegance and decorum is greatly increased.

At this stage a partial break-up of the family takes place. Brothers and sisters must be segregated in obedience to that stringent taboo which plays such an important part in tribal life.[1] The elder children, especially the males, have to leave the house, so as not to hamper by their embarrassing presence the sexual life of their parents. This partial disintegration of the family group is effected by the boy moving to a house tenanted by bachelors or by elderly widowed male relatives or friends. Such a house is called *bukumatula*, and in the next section we shall become acquainted with the details of its arrange-

[1] Cf. ch. xiii, 6, and ch. xiv.

ment. The girl sometimes goes to the house of an elderly widowed maternal aunt or other relative.

As the boy or girl enters upon adolescence the nature of his or her sexual activity becomes more serious. It ceases to be mere child's play and assumes a prominent place among life's interests. What was before an unstable relation culminating in an exchange of erotic manipulation or an immature sexual act becomes now an absorbing passion, and a matter for serious endeavour. An adolescent gets definitely attached to a given person, wishes to possess her, works purposefully towards this goal, plans to reach the fulfilment of his desires by magical and other means, and finally rejoices in achievement. I have seen young people of this age grow positively miserable through ill-success in love. This stage, in fact, differs from the one before in that personal preference has now come into play and with it a tendency towards a greater permanence in intrigue. The boy develops a desire to retain the fidelity and exclusive affection of the loved one, at least for a time. But this tendency is not associated so far with any idea of settling down to one exclusive relationship, nor do adolescents yet begin to think of marriage. A boy or girl wishes to pass through many more experiences; he or she still enjoys the prospect of complete freedom and has no desire to accept obligations. Though pleased to imagine that his partner is faithful, the youthful lover does not feel obliged to reciprocate this fidelity.

We have seen in the previous section that a group of children forming a sort of small republic within the com-

munity is conspicuous in every village. Adolescence furnishes the community with another small group, of youths and girls. At this stage, however, though the boys and girls are much more bound up in each other as regards amorous interests, they but rarely mix in public or in the daytime. The group is really broken up into two, according to sex (pls. 18 and 19; see also pls. 59 and 61). To this division there correspond two words, *to'ulatile* and *nakubukwabuya*, there being no one expression—such as there is to describe the younger age group, *gugwadi*, children—to define the adolescent youth of both sexes.

The natives take an evident pride in this, "the flower of the village," as it might be called. They frequently mention that "all the *to'ulatile* and *nakubukwabuya* (youths and girls) of the village were there." In speaking of some competitive game, or dance or sport, they compare the looks or performance of their own youths with those of some other village, and always to the advantage of their own. This group leads a happy, free, arcadian existence, devoted to amusement and the pursuit of pleasure.

Its members are so far not claimed by any serious duties, yet their greater physical strength and ripeness give them more independence and a wider scope of action than they had as children. The adolescent boys participate, but mainly as free-lances, in garden work (see pl. 19), in the fishing and hunting and in oversea expeditions; they get all the excitement and pleasure, as well as some of the prestige, yet remain free from a great deal of the

drudgery and many of the restrictions which trammel and weigh on their elders. Many of the taboos are not yet quite binding on them, the burden of magic has not yet fallen on their shoulders. If they grow tired of work, they simply stop and rest. The self-discipline of ambition and subservience to traditional ideals, which moves all the older individuals and leaves them relatively little personal freedom, has not yet quite drawn these boys into the wheels of the social machine. Girls, too, obtain a certain amount of the enjoyment and excitement denied to children by joining in some of the activities of their elders, while still escaping the worst of the drudgery.

Young people of this age, besides conducting their love affairs more seriously and intensely, widen and give a greater variety to the setting of their amours. Both sexes arrange picnics and excursions and thus their indulgence in intercourse becomes associated with an enjoyment of novel experiences and fine scenery. They also form sexual connections outside the village community to which they belong. Whenever there occurs in some other locality one of the ceremonial occasions on which custom permits of licence, thither they repair, usually in bands either of boys or of girls, since on such occasions opportunity of indulgence offers for one sex alone (see Ch. ix, esp. secs. 6 and 7).

It is necessary to add that the places used for love-making differ at this stage from those of the previous one. The small children carry on their sexual practices surreptitiously in bush or grove as a part of their games, using all sorts of makeshift arrangements to attain pri-

vacy, but the *ulatile* (adolescent) has either a couch of his own in a bachelors' house, or the use of a hut belonging to one of his unmarried relatives. In a certain type of yam-house, too, there is an empty closed-in space in which boys sometimes arrange little "cosy-corners," affording room for two. In these, they make a bed of dry leaves and mats, and thus obtain a comfortable *garçonnière*, where they can meet and spend a happy hour or two with their loves. Such arrangements are, of course, necessary now that amorous intercourse has become a passion instead of a game.

But a couple will not yet regularly cohabit in a bachelors' house (*bukumatula*), living together and sharing the same bed night after night. Both girl and boy prefer to adopt more furtive and less conventionally binding methods, to avoid lapsing into a permanent relationship which might put unnecessary restraint upon their liberty by becoming generally known. That is why they usually prefer a small nest in the *sokwaypa* (covered yam-house), or the temporary hospitality of a bachelors' house.

We have seen that the youthful attachments between boys and girls at this stage have ripened out of childish games and intimacies. All these young people have grown up in close propinquity and with full knowledge of each other. Such early acquaintances take fire, as it were, under the influence of certain entertainments, where the intoxicating influence of music and moonlight, and the changed mood and attire of all the participants, transfigure the boy and girl in each other's eyes. Intimate observation of the natives and their personal confidences

have convinced me that extraneous stimuli of this kind play a great part in the love affairs of the Trobrianders. Such opportunities of mutual transformation and escape from the monotony of everyday life are afforded not only by the many fixed seasons of festivity and permitted licence, but also by that monthly increase in the people's pleasure-seeking mood which leads to many special pastimes at the full of the moon.[1]

Thus adolescence marks the transition between infantile and playful sexualities and those serious permanent relations which precede marriage. During this intermediate period love becomes passionate and yet remains free.

As time goes on, and the boys and girls grow older, their intrigues last longer, and their mutual ties tend to become stronger and more permanent. A personal preference as a rule develops and begins definitely to overshadow all other love affairs. It may be based on true sexual passion or else on an affinity of characters. Practical considerations become involved in it, and, sooner or later, the man thinks of stabilizing one of his liaisons by marriage. In the ordinary course of events, every marriage is preceded by a more or less protracted period of sexual life in common. This is generally known and spoken of, and is regarded as a public intimation of the matrimonial projects of the pair. It serves also as a test of the strength of their attachment and extent of their mutual compatibility. This trial period also gives time for the prospective bridegroom and for the woman's family to prepare economically for the event.

[1] Cf. ch. ix.

Two people living together as permanent lovers are described respectively as "his woman" (*la vivila*) and "her man" (*la ta'u*). Or else a term, also used to describe the friendship between two men, is applied to this relationship (*lubay-*, with pronominal suffixes). In order to distinguish between a passing liaison and one which is considered preliminary to marriage, they would say of the female concerned in the latter: "*la vivila mokita; imisiya yambwata yambwata*"—"his woman truly; he sleeps with her always always." In this locution the sexual relationship between the two is denoted by the verb "to sleep with" (*imisiya*), the durative and iterative form of *masisi*, to sleep. The use of this verb also emphasizes the lawfulness of the relation, for it is used in talking of sexual intercourse between husband and wife, or of such relations as the speaker wishes to discuss seriously and respectfully. An approximate equivalent in English would be the verb "cohabit." The natives have two other words in distinction to this. The verb *kaylasi*, which implies an illicit element in the act, is used when speaking of adultery or other forms of non-lawful intercourse. Here the English word "fornicate" would come nearest to rendering the native meaning. When the natives wish to indicate the crude, physiological fact, they use the word *kayta*, translatable, though pedantically, by the verb "copulate with."

The pre-matrimonial, lasting intrigue is based upon and maintained by personal elements only. There is no legal obligation on either party. They may enter into and dissolve it as they like. In fact, this relationship dif-

BOYS IN THE YAM GARDEN

[*Ch. III*, 3]

A Decorated Bachelor's House

This is a personal hut (lisiga) *of an unmarried chief in Vakuta—hence its decorated boards—used also as*

fers from other liaisons only in its duration and stability. Towards the end, when marriage actually approaches, the element of personal responsibility and obligation becomes stronger. The two now regularly cohabit in the same house, and a considerable degree of exclusiveness in sexual matters is observed by them. But they have not yet given up their personal freedom; on the several occasions of wider licence affianced couples are invariably separated and each partner is "unfaithful" with his or her temporary choice. Even within the village, in the normal course, the girl who is definitely going to marry a particular boy will bestow favours on other men, though a certain measure of decorum must be observed in this; if she sleeps out too often, there will be possibly a dissolution of the tie and certainly friction and disagreement. Neither boy nor girl may go openly and flagrantly with other partners on an amorous expedition. Quite apart from nocturnal cohabitation, the two are supposed to be seen in each other's company and to make a display of their relationship in public. Any deviation from the exclusive liaison must be decent, that is to say, clandestine. The relation of free engagement is the natural outcome of a series of trial liaisons, and the appropriate preliminary test of marriage.

4

THE BACHELORS' HOUSE

The most important feature of this mode of steering towards marriage, through gradually lengthening and

strengthening intimacies, is an institution which might be called "the limited bachelors' house," and which, indeed, suggests at first sight the presence of a "group concubinage." It is clear that in order to enable pairs of lovers permanently to cohabit, some building is needed which will afford them seclusion. We have seen the makeshift arrangements of children and the more comfortable, but not yet permanent love-nests of adolescent boys and girls, and it is obvious that the lasting liaisons of youth and adult girls require some special institution, more definitely established, more physically comfortable, and at the same time having the approval of custom.

To meet this need, tribal custom and etiquette offer accommodation and privacy in the form of the *bukumatula*, the bachelors' and unmarried girls' house of which mention has already been made (see pls. 20 and 21). In this a limited number of couples, some two, three, or four, live for longer or shorter periods together in a temporary community. It also and incidentally offers shelter for younger couples if they want amorous privacy for an hour or two.

We must now give some more detailed attention to this institution, for it is extremely important and highly significant from many points of view. We must consider the position of the houses in the village, their internal arrangements and the manner in which life within the *bukumatula* shapes itself.

In the description of the typical village in the Trobriands (ch. i, sec. 2), attention was drawn to its schematic division into several parts. This division expresses cer-

tain sociological rules and regularities. As we have seen, there is a vague association between the central place and the male life of the community; between the street and feminine activities. Again, all the houses of the inner row, which consists principally of storehouses (pls. 10 and 82), are subject to certain taboos, especially to the taboo of cooking, which is believed to be inimical to the stored yam. The outer ring, on the other hand, consists of household dwellings, and there cooking is allowed (pls. 4 and 5). With this distinction is associated the fact that all the establishments of married people have to stand in the outer ring, whereas a bachelor's house may be allowed among the storehouses in the middle. The inner row thus consists of yam-houses (*bwayma*), personal huts of a chief and his kinsmen (*lisiga*) (pl. 1), and bachelors' houses (*bukumatula*). The outer ring is made up of matrimonial homes (*bulaviyaka*), closed yam-houses (*sokwaypa*), and widows' or widowers' houses (*bwala nakaka'u*). The main distinction between the two rings is the taboo on cooking. A young chief's *lisiga* (personal hut) is as a rule used also to accommodate other youths and thus becomes a *bukumatula* with all that this implies (pl. 20).

At present there are five bachelors' establishments in Omarakana, and four in the adjoining village of Kasana'i. Their number has greatly diminished owing to missionary influence. Indeed, for fear of being singled out, admonished and preached at, the owners of some *bukumatula* now erect them in the outer ring, where they are less conspicuous. Some ten years ago my informants could

count as many as fifteen bachelors' homes in both villages, and my oldest acquaintances remember the time when there were some thirty. This dwindling in number is due, of course, partly to the enormous decrease of population, and only partly to the fact that nowadays some bachelors live with their parents, some in widowers' houses, and some in the missionary compounds. But whatever the reason, it is needless to say that this state of affairs does not enhance true sex morality.

The internal arrangements of a *bukumatula* are simple. The furniture consists almost exclusively of bunks with mat coverings. Since the inmates lead their life in association with other households in the day-time, and keep all their working implements in other houses, the inside of a typical *bukumatula* is strikingly bare. It lacks the feminine touch, the impression of being really inhabited.

In such an interior the older boys and their temporary mistresses live together. Each male owns his own bunk and regularly uses it. When a couple dissolve their liaison, it is the girl who moves, as a rule, to find another sleeping-place with another sweetheart. The *bukumatula* is, usually, owned by the group of boys who inhabit it, one of them, the eldest, being its titular owner. I was told that sometimes a man would build a house as a *bukumatula* for his daughter, and that in olden days there used to be unmarried people's houses owned and tenanted by girls. I never met, however, any actual instance of such an arrangement.

At first sight, as I have said, the institution of the *bukumatula* might appear as a sort of "Group Marriage"

or at least "Group Concubinage," but analysis shows it to be nothing of the kind. Such wholesale terms are always misleading, if we allow them to carry an extraneous implication. To call this institution "Group Concubinage" would lead to misunderstanding; for it must be remembered that we have to deal with a number of couples who sleep in a common house, each in an exclusive liaison, and not with a group of people all living promiscuously together; there is never an exchange of partners, nor any poaching nor "complaisance." In fact, a special code of honour is observed within the *bukumatula*, which makes an inmate much more careful to respect sexual rights within the house than outside it. The word *kaylasi*, indicating sexual trespass, would be used of one who offended against this code; and I was told that "a man should not do it, because it is very bad, like adultery with a friend's wife."

Within the *bukumatula* a strict decorum obtains. The inmates never indulge in orgiastic pastimes, and it is considered bad form to watch another couple during their love-making. I was told by my young friends that the rule is either to wait till all the others are asleep, or else for all the pairs of a house to undertake to pay no attention to the rest. I could find no trace of any "voyeur" interest taken by the average boy, nor any tendency to exhibitionism. Indeed, when I was discussing the positions and technique of the sexual act, the statement was volunteered that there are specially unobtrusive ways of doing it "so as not to wake up the other people in the *bukumatula*."

Of course, two lovers living together in a *bukumatula* are not bound to each other by any ties valid in tribal law or imposed by custom. They forgather under the spell of personal attraction, are kept together by sexual passion or personal attachment, and part at will. The fact that in due course a permanent liaison often develops out of a temporary one and ends in marriage is due to a complexity of causes, which we shall consider later; but even such a gradually strengthening liaison is not binding until marriage is contracted. *Bukumatula* relationships, as such, impose no legal tie.

Another important point is that the pair's community of interest is limited to the sexual relation only. The couple share a bed and nothing else. In the case of a permanent liaison about to lead to marriage, they share it regularly; but they never have meals together; there are no services to be mutually rendered, they have no obligation to help each other in any way, there is, in short, nothing which would constitute a common ménage. Only seldom can a girl be seen in front of a bachelors' house as in plate 21, and this as a rule means that she is very much at home there, that there has been a liaison of long standing and that the two are going to be married soon. This must be clearly realized, since such words as "liaison" and "concubinage," in the European use, usually imply a community of household goods and interests. In the French language, the expression *vivre en ménage*, describing typical concubinage, implies a shared domestic economy, and other phases of life in common, besides sex. In Kiriwina this phrase could not be correctly applied to a couple living together in the *bukumatula*.

GIRL IN FRONT OF "BUKUMATALA"

Scraping and fraying banana leaves for a grass skirt.

[Ch. III.

In the Trobriands two people about to be married must never have a meal in common. Such an act would greatly shock the moral susceptibility of a native, as well as his sense of propriety. To take a girl out to dinner without having previously married her—a thing permitted in Europe—would be to disgrace her in the eyes of a Trobriander. We object to an unmarried girl sharing a man's bed—the Trobriander would object just as strongly to her sharing his meal. The boys never eat within, or in front of, the *bukumatula*, but always join their parents or other relatives at every meal.

The institution of the *bukumatula* is, therefore, characterized by: (1) individual appropriation, the partners of each couple belonging exclusively to one another; (2) strict decorum and absence of any orgiastic or lascivious display; (3) the lack of any legally binding element; (4) the exclusion of any other community of interest between a pair, save that of sexual cohabitation.

Having described the liaisons which lead directly to marriage, we end our survey of the various stages of sexual life previous to wedlock. But we have not exhausted the subject—we have simply traced the normal course of sexuality and that in its main outlines only. We have yet to consider those licensed orgies to which reference has already been made, to go more deeply into the technique and psychology of love-making, to examine certain sexual taboos, and to glance at erotic myth and folk-lore. But before we deal with these subjects, it will be best to carry our descriptive narrative to its logical conclusion—marriage.

CHAPTER IV

THE AVENUES TO MARRIAGE

The institution of marriage in the Trobriands, which is the theme of this and the following chapter, does not present on its surface any of those sensational features which would endear it to the "survival" monger, the "origin" hunter, and the dealer in "culture contacts." The natives of our Archipelago order their marriages as simply and sensibly as if they were modern European agnostics, without fuss, or ceremony, or waste of time and substance. The matrimonial knot, once tied, is firm and exclusive, at least in the ideal of tribal law, morality, and custom. As usual, however, ordinary human frailties play some havoc with the ideal. The Trobriand marriage customs again are sadly lacking in any such interesting relaxations as *jus primæ noctis,* wife lending, wife exchange, or obligatory prostitution. The personal relations between the two partners, while most illuminating as an example of the matrilineal type of marriage, do not present any of those "savage" features, so lurid, and at the same time so attractive to the antiquarian.

If, however, we dig beneath the surface and lay bare the deeper aspects of this institution, we shall find ourselves face to face with certain facts of considerable importance and of a somewhat unusual type. We shall see that marriage imposes a permanent economic obligation

KAʻOGUSA, THE CHIEF'S SON

[*Ch. IV*, 1]

on the members of the wife's family: for they have to contribute substantially towards the maintenance of the new household. Instead of having to buy his wife, the man receives a dowry, often relatively as tempting as that of a modern European or American heiress. This fact makes marriage among the Trobrianders a pivot in the constitution of tribal power, and in the whole economic system; a pivot, indeed, in almost every institution. Moreover, as far as our ethnological records go, it sets aside their marriage customs as unique among those of savage communities.

Another feature of Trobriand marriage which is of supreme importance to the sociologist is the custom of infant betrothal. This is associated with cross-cousin marriage, and will be seen to have interesting implications and consequences.

I

MOTIVES FOR MARRYING

The gradual strengthening of the bonds between two partners in a liaison, and the tendency to marry displayed at a certain stage of their mutual life in the *bukumatula*, have already been described in the foregoing chapter. We have seen how a couple who have lived together for a time and found that they want to marry, as it were advertise this fact by sleeping together regularly, by showing themselves together in public, and by remaining with each other for long periods at a time.

Now this gradual ripening of the desire for marriage

requires a more minute consideration than we have yet given it, especially as it is one of those general, seemingly obvious questions which do not challenge attention. Yet, if in a closer sociological study we try to place it in its proper perspective, and to bring it into harmony with other features of native life, a real problem at once becomes evident. To us marriage appears as the final expression of love and the desire for union; but in this case we have to ask ourselves why, in a society where marriage adds nothing to sexual freedom, and, indeed, takes a great deal away from it, where two lovers can possess each other as long as they like without legal obligation, they still wish to be bound in marriage. And this is a question to which the answer is by no means obvious.

That there is a clear and spontaneous desire for marriage, and that there is a customary pressure towards it, are two separate facts about which there can be not the slightest doubt. For the first there are the unambiguous statements of individuals—that they married because they liked the idea of a life-long bond to that particular person—and for the second, the expression of public opinion, that certain people are well suited to each other and should therefore marry.

I came across a number of cases in which I could observe this desire for marriage developing over a prolonged period. When I came to Omarakana, I found several couples engaged to be married. The second youngest brother of Namwana Guya'u, Kalogusa (pl. 22), had been previously engaged to Dabugera, a girl of the highest rank, his father's sister's daughter's daughter (i.e.

the matrilineal grand-niece of To'uluwa, the present chief and father of Kalogusa, see below, sec. 5). During a particular absence of her betrothed, which lasted for a year, the girl married another man. On his return, Kalogusa consoled himself by upsetting the engagement of his elder brother, Yobukwa'u, and taking the latter's betrothed, Isepuna, for himself. These two, Kalogusa and Isepuna were very fond of each other; they were always together, and the boy was very jealous. The elder brother did not take his loss very seriously; he started a liaison with another girl, rather plain, lazy, trained in a Mission, and altogether unsatisfactory. Both brothers married their fiancées a few months after I became acquainted with them (see pl. 4, where Kalogusa is seen standing near the hut and Yobukwa'u in the centre, each behind his wife).

Another man, Ulo Kadala, one of the less privileged sons of the chief, was deeply enamoured of a girl whose people, however, did not approve of the match. When I returned again after two years, these two were still not married, and I had an opportunity of witnessing the man's culminating failure to bring about the wedding. I often received confidences from boys longing to marry and faced by some obstacle. Some of them hoped to obtain material help from me, others to be backed by the white man's authority. It was clear that, in all such cases, the pair were already living sexually with each other, but that the thing which they specially desired was marriage. A great friend of mine, Monakewo, had a long and lasting intrigue with Dabugera, the niece of

To'uluwa just mentioned, who by that time had divorced her first husband. He knew that he would never be able to marry her, for her rank was too high for him, and he was genuinely unhappy on this account.

Such instances show clearly that young people want to marry, even when they already possess each other sexually, and that the state of marriage has real charm for them. But before I could entirely understand all the reasons and motives for this desire, I had to grasp the complexities and deeper aspects of the institution, and its relation to other elements in the social system.

The first thing to be realized is that the Trobriander has no full status in social life until he is married. As we saw in the table of age designations, the current term for a man in the prime of life is *tovavaygile* (married man). A bachelor has no household of his own, and is debarred from many privileges. There are, in fact, no unmarried men of mature age, except idiots, incurable invalids, old widowers and albinos. Several men were widowed during my stay in the Islands, and others were deserted by their wives. The former remarried almost as soon as their mourning was over, the latter as soon as their attempts at reconciliation had proved fruitless.

The same applies to women. Provided she is at all sexually tolerable, a widow or divorcée will not have long to wait. Once released from mourning, a widow again becomes marriageable. She may sometimes delay a little, in order to enjoy the sexual freedom of her unmarried state, but such conduct will ultimately draw on her the censure of public opinion, and a growing reputation

for "immorality"—that is disregard of tribal usage—will force her to choose a new mate.

Another very important reason for marriage, from the man's point of view, is economic advantage. Marriage brings with it a considerable yearly tribute in staple food, given to the husband by the wife's family. This obligation is perhaps the most important factor in the whole social mechanism of Trobriand society. On it, through the institution of rank and through his privilege of polygamy, rests the authority of the chief, and his power to finance all ceremonial enterprises and festivities. Thus a man, especially if he be of rank and importance, is compelled to marry, for, apart from the fact that his economic position is strengthened by the income received from his wife's family, he obtains his full social status only by entering the group of *tovavaygile*.

There is, further, the natural inclination of a man past his first youth to have a house and a household of his own. The services rendered by a woman to her husband are naturally attractive to a man of such an age; his craving for domesticity has developed, while his desire for change and amorous adventure has died down. Moreover, a household means children, and the Trobriander has a natural longing for these. Although not considered of his own body nor as continuing his line, they yet give him that tender companionship for which, when he reaches twenty-five or thirty, he begins to crave. He has become used, it should be remembered, to playing with his sister's children and with those of other relatives or neighbours.

These are the reasons—social, economic, practical and sentimental—which urge a man towards marriage. And last, though not least, personal devotion to a woman and the promise of prolonged companionship with one to whom he is attached, and with whom he has sexually lived, prompt him to make certain of her by means of a permanent tie, which shall be binding under tribal law.

The woman, who has no economic inducement to marry, and who gains less in comfort and social status than the man, is mainly influenced by personal affection and the desire to have children in wedlock.

This personal motive comes out very strongly in the course of love affairs which do not run smoothly, and brings us from the reasons for marriage in general to the motives which govern the individual's particular choice.

In this matter it must first be realized that the choice is limited from the outset. A number of girls are excluded completely from a man's matrimonial horizon, namely those who belong to the same totemic class (see ch. xiii, sec. 5). Furthermore, there are certain endogamous restrictions, though these are by no means so precisely defined as those imposed by exogamy. Endogamy enjoins marriage within the same political area, that is within some ten to twelve villages of the same district. The rigidity of this rule depends very much on the particular district. For instance, one area in the north-west corner of the island is absolutely endogamous, for its inhabitants are so despised by the other Islanders that the latter would not dream either of marrying or of having sexual relations within it. Again, the members of the

most aristocratic province of Kiriwina seldom marry outside their own district, except into the neighbouring island of Kitava, or into certain eminent families from one or two outside villages (see also ch. xiii, sec. 5).

Even within this limited geographical area, there are further restrictions on the choice of a mate, and these are due to rank. Thus, members of the highest sub-clan, the Tabalu, and more especially their women, would not marry into a sub-clan of very low caste, and a certain correspondence in nobility is considered desirable even in marriage between less important people.

It follows that choice must be made from among persons who are not of the same clan, who are not widely different in rank, who reside within the convenient geographical area, and who are of a suitable age. In this limited field, however, there is still sufficient freedom of selection to allow of *mariages d'amour, de raison, et de convenance;* and, as with Kalogusa and Isepuna of whom I have spoken, individual preference and love are often the determining factors of choice. And many other married couples, whom I knew well personally, had been governed in their choice by the same motive. This could be gathered from their history, and from the happy, harmonious tone of their common life.

There are also *mariages de convenance,* where wealth, that is the quantity of yams which a girl's family can provide, or pedigree, or status has determined the choice. Such considerations have, of course, a special importance in marriage by infant betrothal, of which we shall speak presently.

2

THE CONSENT OF THE WIFE'S FAMILY

Permanent liaisons which are on the point of ripening into marriage become known and are talked about in the village, and now the girl's family, who, so far, have taken no interest in her love affairs, who have, indeed, kept ostentatiously aloof, must face the fact about to be accomplished, and make up their minds whether or no they will approve it. The man's family, on the other hand, need show little interest in a matter in which they have practically no say. A man is almost entirely independent with regard to matrimony, and his marriage, which will be a matter of constant and considerable effort and worry to his wife's family, will continue to lie completely outside the sphere of his own people's concerns.

It is remarkable that, of all the girl's family, the person who has most to say about her marriage, although legally he is not reckoned as her kinsman (*veyola*), is her father. I was astonished when this information was given to me early in the course of my field work, but it was fully confirmed later on by observation. This paradoxical state of affairs becomes less incomprehensible, however, if we bring it into relation with certain rules of morals and etiquette, and with the economic aspect of marriage. One would naturally expect a girl's brothers and maternal kinsmen to take the most important part in deliberations concerning her marriage, but the strict taboo which rules that the brother must have nothing at all to

do with the love affairs of his sister, and her other maternal kinsmen but little, debars them from any control over her matrimonial plans.

Thus, although her mother's brother is her legal guardian, and her own brothers will in the future occupy the same position with regard to her own household, they must all remain passive until the marriage is an accomplished fact. The father, say the natives, acts in this matter as the spokesman of the mother, who is the proper person to deliberate upon her daughter's love intrigues and marriage. It will also be seen that the father is closely concerned in the work of his sons from the economic standpoint, and that, after the marriage of their sister, these will have to divide the fruits of their labour between her and their mother, instead of, as previously, giving them all to the parental household. When two lovers have decided on marriage, the young man becomes assiduous in his attentions to his sweetheart's family, and perhaps her father will, on his own initiative, say: "You sleep with my child: very well, marry her." As a matter of fact, if the family are well disposed to the youth, they will always take this initiative either by such a direct declaration or else by asking him for small gifts, an equally unambiguous indication that he is accepted.

When the family are definitely opposed to the match and give no sign of goodwill, the boy may take the initiative and plead on his own behalf. If he is refused it may be either because he is of too low a rank, or because he is notoriously lazy, and would be too great a drag on his future relatives-in-law, or else because the girl is in-

tended for someone else. After such a refusal, the pair may relinquish their plans, or, if they are strong enough to fight the matter out, they may try to bring about their marriage in the teeth of opposition. If they decide to do this, the bride stays in her lover's house (that is, in his parents' house), as if she were really married, and the news is spread abroad that the man is attempting to wed her in spite of her people. Sometimes the two actually elope and go to another village in the hope of impressing and mortifying their hard-hearted opponents. In any case, they stay indoors all day, and do not eat any food to see if this will soften the hearts of her family. This abstention from the common meal, which, as we know, constitutes a definite declaration of marriage, shows that they are still waiting for her family's consent.

In the meantime, the boy's father or maternal uncle may go as an ambassador to the girl's family and offer them a gift of high value to melt their resistance. Under this combined pressure the latter may give in, and send the customary present to the young couple. If, on the other hand, they do not relent, they repair in great numbers to the spot where the girl stays with the youth and "pull her back," a customary and technical expression, but one which also indicates what actually occurs. The boy's relatives and friends may possibly oppose the "pulling back," and then a scuffle will ensue. But the girl's people always have the whip hand, for, as long as they withhold their consent, nobody can force them to supply the pair with food, and without this the household is soon dissolved in the natural course.

A few examples of such abortive marriage occurred in my own experience. Mekala'i, a boy whom I often used as a temporary servant, became enamoured of Bodulela, a really attractive young girl, and the step-daughter of the headman of Kabululo, who, as was well known in the village, lived incestuously with her (see ch. xiii, sec. 6). Mekala'i made an heroic attempt to abduct and retain her in his parents' house in Kasana'i, but he had no wealthy relatives or powerful friends to back him up. On the first afternoon of their joint life, the headman of Kabululo simply walked over to Kasana'i, took his abashed and truant step-daughter by the hand, and led her back to his own house; that was the end.

Another and a more complicated case was that of Ulo Kadala, who was mentioned in the last section. He wooed a girl during my first stay in Omarakana and was refused by her parents. The couple attempted to settle down to married life, but the family pulled the girl back by force. Ulo Kadala still continued his faithful courtship. On my second visit to Omarakana two years later, the girl came to the village once more and took up her abode in the house of Isupwana, the adoptive mother of Ulo Kadala, a stone's throw from my tent. This second attempt at marriage lasted, I think, for a day or two, while To'uluwa was making some not very energetic efforts towards reconciliation. One afternoon the parents arrived from the neighbouring village, and laid hold of the girl and unceremoniously carried her away. The procession passed in front of my tent, the wailing girl led by her father and followed by vociferous partisans, who

hurled abuse at each other. The girl's people said quite explicitly what they thought of Ulo Kadala, of his laziness, his incapacity for doing anything properly, and his well-known greed. "We do not want you, we shall not give her any food." This argument clinched the refusal, and that was the last attempt which the two young people made.

When the parents are well disposed and signify their pleasure in the match by asking the intended for a small present, the engaged couple must still wait for a little in order to give necessary time for the preparations. But one day the girl instead of returning in the morning to her parents' house, will remain with her husband, take her meals in the house of his parents and accompany him throughout the day. The word goes round: "Isepuna is already married to Kalogusa." Such proceedings constitute the act of marriage. There is no other rite, no other ceremony to mark the beginnings of wedlock. From the morning on which she has remained with the bridegroom, the girl is married to him, provided, of course, the consent of the parents has been given. Without this, as we have seen, the act constitutes only an attempt at marriage. Though utterly simple, this act of remaining with the man, of openly sharing a meal with him, and of staying under his roof, has a legally binding force. It is the conventional public declaration of marriage. It has serious consequences, for it changes the life of the two concerned, and it imposes considerable obligations on the girl's family, obligations associated in turn with counter-obligations on the part of the bridegroom.

MARRIAGE GIFT IN PREPARATION

A young husband of rank stands to the left of his newly-built and decorated store-house; the pwata'i *is still in construction; the wife's brother is putting the final touches to it. Some food has already been brought in and is seen in baskets round the prism-shaped erection.*

PLATE 24

THE MARRIAGE GIFT DISPLAYED

An exceptionally large pwata'i *erected on the outskirts of the village, filled with* taytu (*staple small yams*) *capped with* kuvi (*large yams*) *and taro.*

[*Ch. IV,* 3]

3

MARRIAGE GIFTS

This simple declaration of marriage is followed by that exchange of gifts which is so typical of any social transaction in the Trobriands. Each gift is definite in nature and quantity, each has to take its proper place in a series and each is reciprocated by some corresponding contribution. The subjoined table will help to make clear the description which follows it:

MARRIAGE GIFTS

I G—B	1. *Katuvila*—cooked yams, brought in baskets by the girl's parents to the boy's family. 2. *Pepe'i*—several baskets of uncooked yams, one given by each of the girl's relatives to the boy's parents. 3. *Kaykaboma*—cooked vegetables, each member of the girl's family bringing one platter to the boy's house.
II B—G	4. *Mapula Kaykaboma*—repayment of gift (3), given in exactly the same form and material by the boy's relatives to the girl's family. 5. *Takwalela Pepe'i*—valuables given by the boy's father in repayment of gift (2) to the girl's father.
III G—B	6. *Vilakuria*—a large quantity of yam-food offered at the first harvest after the marriage to the boy by the girl's family.
IV B—G	7. *Saykwala*—gift of fish brought by the boy to his wife's father in repayment of (6). 8. *Takwalela Vilakuria*—a gift of valuables handed by the boy's father to the girl's father in payment of (6).

G—B (girl to boy), gifts from the girl's family; B—G, return gifts from the boy's relatives to the girl's.

The girl's family have to make the first offering to signify their consent to the marriage. Since their agreement is absolutely essential, this gift, in conjunction with the public declaration of the union of the partners, con-

stitutes marriage. It is a small gift, a little cooked food brought in baskets and offered by the girl's father to the boy's parents. It is set down in front of their house with the words *kam katuvila*, "thy *katuvila* gift." It must be given on the day on which the two remain together, or on the morning of the next day. As we have seen, when the consent of the girl's family is doubtful the two partners often abstain from food till this gift is brought.

Soon afterwards, usually on the same day, the girl's relatives bring a bigger present. Her father, her maternal uncle, and her brothers who now for the first time emerge from the inaction imposed on them by the specific brother-sister taboo, each bring a basket of uncooked yam food, and offer it to the boy's parents. This gift is called *pepe'i*. But even this is not enough. A third offering of food is brought to the boy's parents, cooked this time and carried on large platters, such as can be seen on plates 4 and 5. This gift is called *kaykaboma*.[1]

The boy's family must not delay long before they reciprocate. The last gift, cooked food on trays, is returned almost immediately and in exactly the same form as it was received. A more important gift follows. The boy's father has already prepared certain valuables of the *vaygu'a* type, that is to say, large, polished axe-blades of green stone, necklaces of polished spondylus shell discs, and armlets made of the *conus* shell; also, when the sec-

[1] The reader who has grasped the complex psychology of ceremonial gifts in the *kula* and in associated activities will understand the great importance of the exchanges which accompany so many social transactions in the Trobriands. Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, especially chs. iii and vi.

ond gift of uncooked food was brought to him by the girl's family, he made a small distribution of it among his own relatives, and they in turn now bring him other valuables to add to his own. All these he presents to the girl's family; he has kept the baskets in which the food was brought to him; he puts the valuables into these, and they are carried by himself and his family to the girl's house. This gift is called *takwalela pepe'i*, or "repayment in valuables of the *pepe'i* gift."

The reader is perhaps weary of all these petty details, but this meticulous absorption in small gifts and counter-gifts is highly characteristic of the Trobrianders. They are inclined to boast of their own gifts, with which they are entirely satisfied, while disputing the value and even quarrelling over what they themselves receive, but they regard these details as most important and observe them scrupulously. In the exchange of marriage gifts, as a rule, they are less cantankerous than on other occasions, and a more generous and friendly spirit prevails. After the *takwalela pepe'i* there is a long pause in the exchange of gifts, which lasts until the next harvest. During this time and while the couple's own dwelling is being built, the wife usually remains with her husband in his father's house. At harvest time they will receive the first substantial gift due from the girl's family, and of this they will themselves make a distribution by way of payment to those who have helped in the building of their new home.

To resume, then, the girl's family give a present of considerable value at the next harvest, and from then on

at every harvest they will have to help the new household with a substantial contribution of fresh yams. The first present of this sort, however, has a special name (*vilakuria*), and is surrounded by a ceremonial of its own. Prism-shaped receptacles (*pwata'i*) are constructed of poles, in front of the young couple's yam-house (see pls. 23 and 24), and the girl's family, after selecting a large quantity, a hundred, two hundred, or even three hundred basketfuls of the best yams, arrange them in these receptacles with a great amount of ceremony and display.

This gift also must be repaid without any too great delay. Fish is considered a proper counter-offering. In a coastal village, the husband will embark with his friends on a fishing expedition. If he lives inland, he has to purchase the fish in one of the coastal villages, paying for them in yams.

The fish is laid in front of the girl's parents' house, with the words "*Kam saykwala*" (thy *saykwala* gift). Sometimes, if the young husband is very rich, or else if he and his family were not able previously to repay the *pepe'i* present, a gift of *vaygu'a* (valuables) will be given at this point in answer to the first harvest offering. This is called *takwalela vilakuria* (repayment by valuables of the *vilakuria* present), and closes the series of initial marriage gifts.

This series of gifts appears at first sight unnecessarily complicated. But, if we examine it more closely, we find that it represents a continuous story, and is no mere disconnected jumble of incident. In the first place it expresses the leading principle in the economic relation

which will subsequently obtain for the whole duration of the marriage: that the girl's family provide the newly established household with food, being occasionally repaid with valuables. The small initial gifts (1, 2, and 3), express the consent of the girl's family, and are a sort of earnest of their future and more considerable contributions. The return offering of food (4), made immediately by the boy's family, is a characteristically Trobriand answer to a compliment. And the only really substantial gifts from the bridegroom's family to the bride's (5, or 8, or both) exert a definitely binding force on the husband, for if the marriage be dissolved, he does not recover them save in exceptional cases. They are about equivalent in value to all the other first year's gifts put together. But this present from the husband must emphatically not be considered as purchase money for the bride. This idea is utterly opposed both to the native point of view and to the facts of the case. Marriage is meant to confer substantial material benefits on the man. These he repays at rare intervals with a gift of valuables, and it is such a gift that he has to offer at the moment of marriage. It is an anticipation of the benefits to follow, and by no means a price paid for the bride.

It may be mentioned that not all of this series of gifts are equally indispensable. Of the first three, only one (either 1 or 2) must be given at all costs. Of the rest, 6 and 7 are never omitted, while either 5 or 8 is absolutely obligatory.

It is necessary, as I have already said, to enter into such minute details as these if we would approximate

to the savage point of view. Closely observing the care and anxiety with which the gifts are gathered and given, it is possible to determine the psychology of the acts themselves. Thus Paluwa, the father of Isepuna, worried good-humouredly as to how he might collect sufficient food to offer to a chief's son, his daughter's future husband; and he discussed his troubles with me at length. He was faced by the difficulty of having three daughters and several female relatives, and only three sons. Everybody's working power had already been taxed to provide food for the other married daughters. And now Isepuna was going to wed Kalogusa, a man of high rank in his own right, and also a son of To'uluwa, the paramount chief. All his people exerted themselves to the utmost to produce as big a crop as possible that season, in order to be able to give a fine *vilakuria* present. And To'uluwa, the bridegroom's father, on his side, revealed to me his own anxiety. Could he provide a worthy counter gift? Times were hard, and yet something fine had to be given. I inspected several of the chief's valuables, and discussed their respective suitability with him. There was an undercurrent of suggestion, in the conversation of both parties, that some tobacco from the white man would be a much appreciated addition to either gift.

4

INFANT BETROTHAL AND CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGE

There is another way of arranging marriages in the Trobriands beside the ordinary method of courtship, and

In many respects the two are in sharp contrast to each other. Normal marriage is brought about by free choice, by trial, and by the gradual strengthening of bonds which assume a legal obligation only after marriage. In marriage by infant betrothal, a binding agreement is made by the parents in the children's infancy; the boy and girl grow up into the relationship, and find themselves bound to each other before they have had an opportunity to choose for themselves.

The great importance of this second type of marriage lies in the fact that infant betrothal is always associated with cross-cousin marriage. The two people who, according to native ideas, are most suited for marriage with each other—a man's son and the daughter of his sister—are betrothed in infancy. When the father's sister's daughter is too old to be betrothed to her male infant cousin, her daughter may replace her. By the native legal system the two are equivalent, for the purposes of this marriage.

The significance of this institution can be understood only if we return to a consideration of the compromise between father-love and matriliny.[1] Cross-cousin marriage is an arrangement whereby both tribal law, which enjoins matrilineal succession, and the promptings of paternal love, which incline the father to bestow all possible privileges on his son, find equitable adjustment and adequate satisfaction.

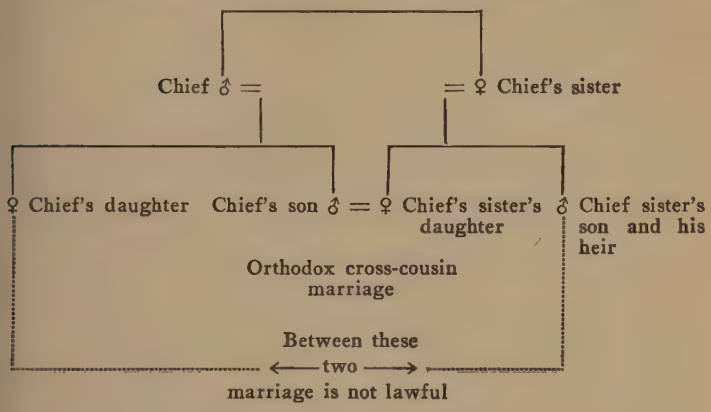
Let us take a concrete instance. A chief, a village headman—or, indeed, any man of rank, wealth. and

[1] Cf. also *Crime and Custom.*

power, will give to a favourite son all that he can safely alienate from his heirs; some plots in the village lands, privileges in fishing and hunting, some of the hereditary magic, a position in the *kula* exchange, a privileged place in the canoe and precedence in dancing. Often the son becomes in some sort his father's lieutenant, performing magic instead of him, leading the men in tribal council, and displaying his personal charm and influence on all those occasions when a man may win the much-coveted *butura* (renown). As examples of this tendency, which I have found in every community where there was a chief of outstanding influence, we may take the arrogant Namwana Guya'u, before his banishment the leading figure in the village life of Omarakana (see ch. i, sec. 2). Again, in the sister village of Kasana'i, the chief's son Kayla'i, a modest and good-natured fellow, wielded the power of thunder and sunshine in virtue of the supreme system of weather-magic which his father had imparted to him. And the coastal villages of Kavataria, Sinaketa, Tukwa'ukwa, each had its leader in a son of the chief. But such privileged positions are invidious and insecure, even while they last, as the rightful heirs and owners in matriliny resent being pushed aside during the lifetime of the chief; and, in any case, all such benefits cease with the father's death. There is only one way by which the chief can establish his son permanently in the village with rights of full citizenship for himself and his progeny, and secure possession of all the gifts until death; and that is by contracting the son in paternal cross-cousin marriage, marriage with his sister's daughter or with this daughter's

daughter. The following diagram will help to make the genealogy of the relation clear.

DIAGRAMMATIC GENEALOGY OF CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGE


Chief ♂ =
= ♀ Chief's sister
♀ Chief's daughter
Chief's son ♂ = ♀ Chief's sister's daughter
♂ Chief sister's son and his heir
Orthodox cross-cousin marriage
Between these two
marriage is not lawful

Our diagrammatical chief has a sister; and she has a son, the chief's heir and successor, and a daughter, the chief's niece by his sister, a girl who will continue the aristocratic line. The husband of this girl will enjoy a very privileged position, into which he will step on the day of his marriage. By native law and custom he will have a definite claim on his wife's brother or brothers and other male relatives, who will be obliged to give him annual tribute of food, and will be considered his *ex-officio* allies, friends, and helpers. He also acquires the right to live in the village if he choose, and to participate in tribal affairs and in magic. It is clear, therefore, that he will occupy practically the same position as that enjoyed by the chief's son during his father's lifetime, and

from which he is ousted by the rightful heir at his father's death. This type of marriage differs from the ordinary one also in that the husband comes to live in his wife's community. Cross-cousin marriage is thus matrilocal in contradistinction to the ordinary patrilocal usage.[1]

The obvious and natural solution, therefore, of the chief's difficulty is to marry his son to his niece or grand-niece. Usually all parties benefit by the transaction. The chief and his son get what they want; the chief's niece marries the most influential man in the village, and in so doing confirms this influence; and an alliance is established between the son of the chief and his lawful heirs which frustrates the potential rivalry between them. The girl's brother cannot oppose the marriage, because of the taboo (see ch. xiii, sec. 6); nor, as it is contracted in the chief's son's infancy, would he normally be in a position to do so.

5

MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES IN A CHIEF'S FAMILY

Whenever there is a possibility of it, a cross-cousin marriage will always be arranged, a fact which is well illustrated in the family of To'uluwa (see the adjacent pedigree).

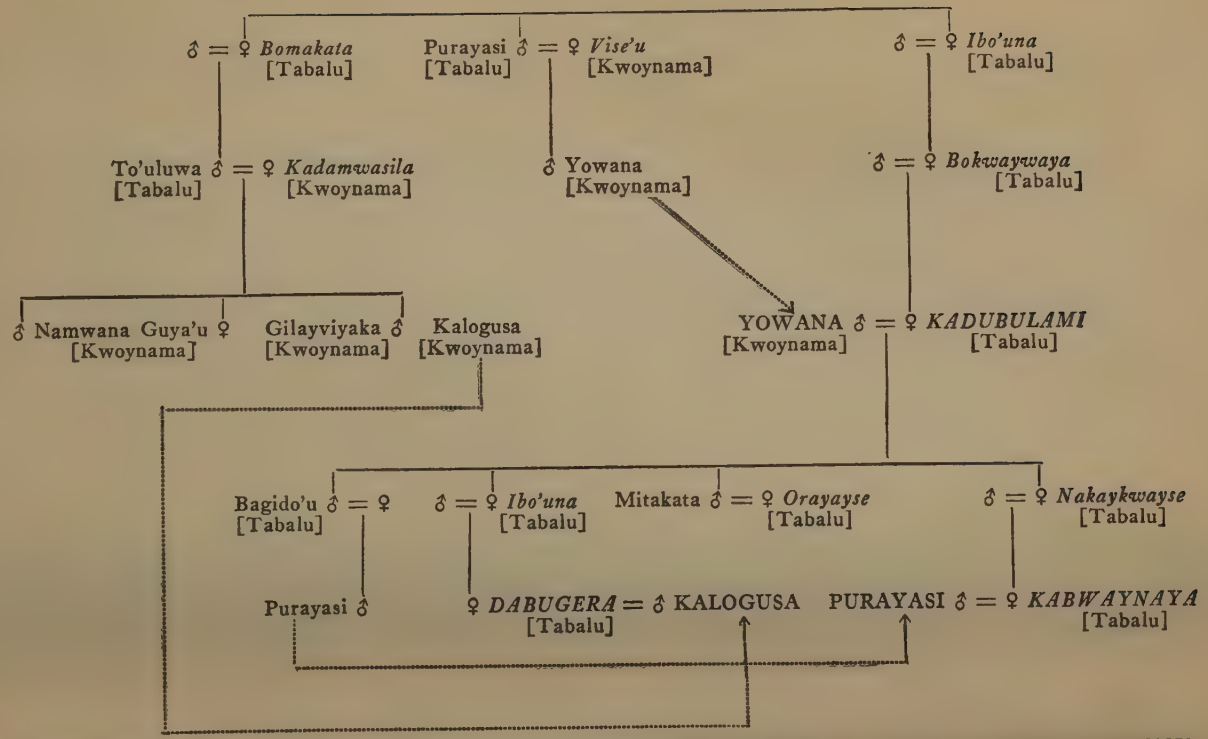
When Namwana Guya'u, the eldest son of To'uluwa's favourite and most aristocratic wife, was born, there was no marriageable girl available for him in his father's

[1] I think that any man could settle in his wife's community if he wished. But by doing so, he would both degrade himself and suffer disabilities. A chief's son, however, is an exception owing to his position in the village and his vested interests.

family, that is to say, among To'uluwa's maternal kinswomen. Ibo'una and Nakaykwase were, by that time, almost marriageable and could not be affianced to a little child, and their daughters were yet unborn. And the pedigree shows no other female in the sub-clan of the Tabalu, To'uluwa's matrilineal lineage. But by the time a younger son, Kalogusa, was born to To'uluwa, his grand-niece, Ibo'una, had a small daughter, Dabugera; therefore the two were betrothed. In this case the cross-cousin marriage failed, for, as we have seen (see above, sec. 1), the girl married another man during her fiancé's absence abroad.

In the same pedigree we can take another example from the previous generation. Purayasi, the penultimate chief of Omarakana, had a son called Yowana, who belonged to the same sub-clan as Namwana Guya'u. Yowana was a man of great talent and strong personality; he was renowned for his mastery of several systems of important magic which he performed for his father, and for his skill as a gardener, sailor, and dancer. He married Kadubulami, Purayasi's grand-niece, and lived all his life in Omarakana in the enjoyment of his personal privileges. He instructed his son, Bagido'u, the present heir apparent, in all his magical and other accomplishments.

In his turn Bagido'u had a son by his first wife, but he died in infancy. This child, soon after birth, had been betrothed to an infant daughter of Bagido'u's youngest sister Nakaykwase. Thus, in one small pedigree, we see three cases of cross-cousin marriage arranged by infant betrothal. It must be remembered, however, that this


♂ = ♀ Bomakata [Tabalu]
Purayasi ♂ = ♀ Vise'u [Tabalu] [Kwoynama]
♂ = ♀ Ibo'una [Tabalu]
To'uluwa ♂ = ♀ Kadamwasila [Tabalu] [Kwoynama]
♂ Yowana [Kwoynama]
♂ = ♀ Bokwaywaya [Tabalu]
♂ Namwana Guya'u ♀ [Kwoynama]
Gilayviyaka ♂ [Kwoynama]
Kalogusa [Kwoynama]
YOWANA ♂ = ♀ KADUBULAMI [Kwoynama] [Tabalu]
Bagido'u ♂ = ♀ [Tabalu]
♂ = ♀ Ibo'una [Tabalu]
Mitakata ♂ = ♀ Orayayse [Tabalu]
♂ = ♀ Nakaykwayse [Tabalu]
Purayasi ♂
♀ DABUGERA = ♂ KALOGUSA [Tabalu]
PURAYASI ♂ = ♀ KABWAYNAYA [Tabalu]

PEDIGREE SHOWING THE ALLIANCES BETWEEN THE SUB-CLANS TABALU AND KWOYNAMA, AND THEIR CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGES, WHICH ARE INDICATED BY CAPITAL LETTERS

pedigree includes the noblest family of the chieftains of Omarakana and the sub-clan Kwoynama of Osapola, both regarded as especially suitable for entering into matrimonial alliance.

Cross-cousin marriage is, undoubtedly, a compromise between the two ill-adjusted principles of mother-right and father-love; and this is its main *raison d'être*. The natives are not, of course, capable of a consistent theoretical statement; but in their arguments and formulated motives this explanation of the why and wherefore of the institution is implicit, in an unmistakable though piecemeal form. Several points of view are expressed and reasons given by them which throw some further light on their ideas, but all, if pushed to a conclusion, point to the same ultimate reason for cross-cousin marriage. Sometimes, for instance, it will be stated as a rider to the principle of exogamy that "the marriage between brother and sister is wrong" ("brother and sister" in the extended sense, all people of opposite sex and of the same generation related through the mother). "To marry a *tabula* (cross-cousin) is right; the true *tabula* (the first cross-cousin) is the proper wife for us."

Let us make clear one more point: among all the marriages possible between cousins, only one is lawful and desirable for the Trobriander. Two young people of opposite sex, whose mothers are sisters, are, of course, subject to the strict sexual taboo which obtains between brother and sister. A boy and a girl who are the children of two brothers stand in no special relation to each other. They may marry if they like, but there is no reason why

they should; no special custom or institution is connected with such a relationship, since in a matrilineal society it is irrelevant. Only a boy and a girl, descendants of a brother and sister respectively, can conclude a marriage which is lawful and which, at the same time, stands out from mere haphazard alliances; for here, as we have seen, a man gives his own kinswoman to his son for a wife. But an important point must here be noted: the man's son has to marry the woman's daughter, and not the man's daughter the woman's son. Only in the former combination do the two people call each other *tabugu*, a term which implies lawfulness of sexual intercourse. The other couple joined by a dotted line on the diagram (sec. 4) stand in a different relation according to native ideas of kinship (see the discussion of these kinship terms in ch. xiii, sec. 6). A girl calls the son of her father's sister *tamagu* "my father." Marriage with the real father or with the father's brother is incestuous and strictly tabooed. Marriage with the *tama* ("father"=father's sister's son) is not incestuous, but it is viewed with disfavour and happens only rarely. Such a marriage offers few inducements. A chief might like his daughter to be married to another chief or to a man of rank in his own family, but she would not thus acquire any specially high or privileged position. On the other hand, as his daughter will have to be supported by the same men who now work for her mother, the chief's wife, he may prefer for his own sake to marry her to a humbler and less exacting person than his heir. It all depends on his relations

with his heir, which are, as we have seen, by no means so uniformly friendly and intimate as those with his own son.

The advantages of cross-cousin marriage were put to me from another point of view by Bagido'u, when I asked him why he had wanted his little son Purayasi to marry Kabwaynaya. "I wanted a daughter-in-law who would be my real kinswoman," he said. "I wanted, when I got old, to have someone of my family to look after me; to cook my food; to bring me my lime-pot and lime-stick, to pull out my grey hairs. It is bad to have a stranger to do that. When it is someone of my own people, I am not afraid." His fear was, of course, of sorcery. It should be realized that since marriage is patrilocal, and since the son, in the case of important people, often remains near the father, this latter has good reasons to be interested in his daughter-in-law. Since she is his kinswoman there is yet another justification for his son's residence in the father's community. Thus we are brought back to cross-cousin marriage as the reconciling compromise between the claims of father-love and matriliny. The man may have to rely, in his old age, on the attentions of his son and his son's wife, but neither of them are his real kindred unless the daughter-in-law is also his sister's child. In spite of his personal affection for his son, he prefers to have someone of his own *veyola* (maternal kindred) about him, and this can only be achieved if the son marries the right cross-cousin, that is the father's sister's daughter or her daughter.

6

CEREMONIES OF INFANT BETROTHAL

Now that we have grasped the principles of cross-cousin marriage, a brief account must be given of the steps and ceremonies by which it is brought about. The initiative is always taken by the brother, who, on behalf of his son, asks his sister for the hand of her daughter in marriage. A man has a definite right to make such a request; as the natives say: "Is he not the *kadala* (maternal uncle) of the girl? Are his sister and her child not his real *veyola* (maternal kindred)? Has he not raised the *yurigubu* (annual harvest contribution) for the household?"

The request may be made when the son is born, if his sister has a daughter, or perhaps a granddaughter (daughter's daughter), who will not be too old to become the wife of the new-born infant later on. The disparity of age should never exceed two or three years.

Or the boy's father may wait, and if within ten years or so a girl is born to his sister, he may requisition her as a future daughter-in-law. His sister is not allowed to refuse his application. Soon after the preliminary agreement has been concluded, the man has to take a *vaygu'a* (valuable), a polished axe-blade or shell ornament, and give it to his sister's husband, the father (*tama*) of the infant bride. "This is the *katupwoyna kapo'ula* for your child," he says, and adds that it is given "so that she may

not sleep with men, nor make *katuyausi* (licentious escapades), nor sleep in the *bukumatula* (bachelors' house). She must sleep in her mother's house only." Shortly after this, three gifts of food are offered by the girl's family to the boy's father. They are similar in nature to the three initial gifts in ordinary marriage, and are designated by the same names: *katuvila*, *pepe'i*, and *kaykaboma*.

The natives regard *vaypokala* (infant betrothal) as equivalent to actual marriage. The betrothed are spoken of as husband and wife, and thus address each other. As in adult wedding, the three gifts are considered to conclude the marriage and the infant bridegroom's family have to repay the last present by a return gift of food—*mapula kaykaboma*. At the next harvest, the girl's father brings a *vilakuria* (substantial contribution of yam food) to the boy's parents. This latter fact is interesting, since it is a reversal, on account of the anticipated marriage, of what happens in the previous generation. The boy's father, who is the brother of the girl's mother, has to give a harvest gift year by year to the girl's parents; and this at the time of his sister's marriage he had inaugurated by a gift of *vilakuria*. Now he receives on behalf of his infant son a *vilakuria* gift from his sister's husband, who acts as the representative of his own son or sons, that is the brother or brothers of the future bride, who later on will annually bring substantial harvest offerings to the household, when it becomes such. As yet, however, the yearly *urigubu* (harvest gifts) do not follow the first

offering of crops (the *vilakuria*), and this interval in the exchange of gifts lasts until betrothal culminates in actual marriage.

This concludes the preliminary exchange of gifts at infant betrothal. Although it is called by the natives a marriage, the *de facto* difference between betrothal and marriage is recognized in the explicit statements of the natives and in custom, for when the two grow up they have to marry again. The bride, that is, has to go officially to the bridegroom's house, share his bed there, take her meals with him and be publicly announced to have married him. The initial gifts of ordinary marriage, however (Nos. 1-4 of the table in sec. 3) are omitted on this occasion. Only the large harvest gift (*vilakuria*), and its repayment (*takwalela vilakuria*) are exchanged.

But before this stage is reached and the two are safely married, a somewhat difficult course has to be steered. Although nobody seriously expects the young people to be chaste and faithful to each other, appearances have to be kept up. A flagrant transgression of the obligation to the betrothed would be resented by the offended party, and with some exaggeration called "adultery." It is considered a great shame to the girl if her fiancé openly has a liaison with someone else, and she on her side must not make a *bukumatula* her permanent abode either in the company of her betrothed or of anyone else; nor may she go to other villages on those avowedly sexual expeditions called *katuyausi* (see ch. ix, sec. 7). Both parties to the betrothal must carry on their amours discreetly and *sub rosa*. This, of course, is neither easy nor pleasant for

them, and they tread the strait path of superficial decorum only under heavy pressure. The boy knows what he has to lose, so he is as careful as he can bring himself to be. Also, the father controls his son to some extent, and at the same time exercises some authority over his future daughter-in-law, through his status of maternal uncle. A man who had betrothed his son and niece to each other put the matter thus to me: "She is afraid that she might die (that is, by sorcery), or that I might hit her." And, of course, her mother is very careful and does what she can to conceal and make light of her daughter's delinquencies.

In spite of this, friction is common and ruptures not unknown. One of my earliest informants was Gomaya of Sinaketa, an enterprising, but very lazy and dishonest man, and a great *coureur de femmes*. I got his story partly from himself, partly from gossip, and partly by personal observation. He was betrothed to his cross-cousin, but in spite of this, entered into a flagrant intrigue with a good-looking girl, one Ilamweria of Wakayse, a village near Omarakana (see ch. vii, sec. 4). Once, when he brought this girl to Sinaketa, the kinsmen of his fiancée wanted to kill her and she had to run away. When Gomaya grew tired of his amour and went back to his native village, he wished to sleep with his betrothed, but she refused. "You always sleep with Ilamweria," she said, "so go to her." He at once applied to a man acquainted with love magic and asked for a spell, saying: "I want to sleep with my wife (that is, my fiancée); she refuses me. I must make some magic over her." And

it was only after the required rites had been performed that she yielded. The marriage, however, was never completed, for in the end her parents dismissed him as a lazy good-for-nothing. The presents were not returned, for this is not customary when a cross-cousin betrothal is dissolved. We have also seen that the betrothal between Kalogusa and Dabugera never resulted in marriage. But in my opinion both these failures, which are of recent date, were largely due to the subversive influence of the white man on native custom.

In the foregoing sections we have given an account of the various inducements to marriage and of the two modes of contracting it. In the next chapter we shall pass to a description of the phases of wedded life itself, and of the sociological features of marriage as an institution.

PLATE 25

MITAKATA AND ORAYSE

She is lousing him, one of the few intimate attentions allowed in public between husband and wife.

[*Ch. I'*, 1; *also ch. X*, 3]

A Happy Family

Tokulubakiki and his wife Kuwo'igu in front of their yam house; their little daughter is in the usual position on the mother's hip.

[*Ch. V*, 1]

CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE

Husband and wife in the Trobriands lead their common life in close companionship, working side by side, sharing certain of the household duties, and spending a good deal of their leisure with each other, for the most part in excellent harmony and with mutual appreciation. We have already visited a native household, while taking a general survey of the relations between the sexes, and have gained this impression from our preliminary inspection. With our present greater knowledge of Trobriand sociology, and better understanding of sexual matters, we must now reconsider the subject of the personal relations between husband and wife.

I

HUSBAND AND WIFE AS COMPANIONS

We left the young couple starting their common life in the hut of the bridegroom's parents; here they remain until the protracted series of marriage gifts and counter-gifts, and the redistribution of every one of these among more distant relatives, has been completed. Only about the time of the next harvest do they build their own home; until then they have to spend a protracted "honey-

moon" under the parental roof. This must seem a most unsatisfactory state of affairs to the European reader. But he must avoid drawing too close a parallel to our own conditions. The young people have left the passionate stages of their life together behind them in the *bukumatula*, and the initial months of matrimony, on which they now enter, are not of predominantly sexual interest to them. Now it is the change in their social status, and the alteration which their relations undergo, both towards their own families and towards the other people in the village, which mainly preoccupy them.

Although there is no definite sexual taboo at this time, the newly wedded couple probably think less of love-making during the stage which corresponds to our honeymoon than they have done for a long time previously. I have heard this statement volunteered: "We feel ashamed in the house of our mother and father. In the *bukumatula* a man has intercourse with his sweetheart before they marry. Afterwards they sleep on the same bunk in the parental house, but they do not take off their garments." The young couple suffer from the embarrassment of new conditions. The earlier nights of marriage are a natural period of abstinence.

When the pair move on to their own hut, they may or may not share the same bunk; there seems to be no rule in this matter. Some of my native authorities specifically informed me that married couples always sleep in the same bed at first, but later on they separate and come together only for intercourse. I suspect, however,

that this is rather a piece of cynical philosophy than a statement of accepted usage.

It must be remembered that it is impossible to get direct information from any man concerning his own conjugal life; for in this matter a very strict etiquette has to be observed. In speaking to a husband the slightest allusion to this must be avoided. Nor is any reference allowed to their common sexual past, nor to the woman's previous love adventures with other men. It would be an unpardonable breach of etiquette were you to mention, even unwittingly and in passing, the good looks of a wife to her husband: the man would walk away and not come near you for a long time. The Trobriander's grossest and most unpardonable form of swearing or insult is *Kwoy um kwava* (copulate with thy wife). It leads to murder, sorcery, or suicide (see ch. xiii, sec. 4).

There is an interesting and, indeed, startling contrast between the free and easy manner which normally obtains between husband and wife, and their rigid propriety in matters of sex, their restraint of any gesture which might suggest the tender relation between them. When they walk, they never take hands or put their arms about each other in the way, called *kaypapa*, which is permitted to lovers and to friends of the same sex. Walking with a married couple one day, I suggested to the man that he might support his wife, who had a sore foot and was limping badly. Both smiled and looked on the ground in great embarrassment, evidently abashed by my improper suggestion. Ordinarily a married couple walk one behind the other in single file. On public and festival

occasions they usually separate, the wife joining a group of other women, the husband going with the men. You will never surprise an exchange of tender looks, loving smiles, or amorous banter between a husband and wife in the Trobriands.

To quote a terse statement of the case made by one of my informants: "A man who puts his arm round his wife on the *baku* (central place of the village, i.e. in public); a man who lies down beside his wife on his yam-house platform—he is a fool. If we take hold of our wife by the hand—we act as fools. If a husband and wife catch each other's lice on the *baku*—that is correct" (see pl. 25). With the possible exception of the last point, it will be conceded that married couples in the Trobriands push their etiquette to a point which would seem unnaturally exaggerated and burdensome to us.

This punctilio, as we know, does not preclude good-humoured familiarity in other respects. Husband and wife may talk and exchange banter in public as long as any allusion to sex is rigidly excluded. Generally speaking, husband and wife remain on excellent terms, and show a marked liking for each other's company. In Omarakana, Oburaku, Sinaketa, and in the many other places where I became intimately acquainted with the domestic life of the people, I found the majority of couples united by unwavering sexual attachment or by real congeniality of temperament. Kalogusa and his wife, to take an instance from among friends already mentioned, I found as good comrades after two years of marriage as in the days of courtship. And Kuwo'igu, the wife of

my best informant and chief favourite, Tokulubakiki, made him a good mate, for the two were well-matched in looks, in dignity, in decency of character and in sweetness of temper (see pl. 26). Mitakata and his wife Orayayse, before their divorce, Towese'i and Ta'uya; Namwana Guya'u and Ibomala were all, in spite of occasional differences, excellent friends and companions. Between older couples also a real affection is sometimes found. The chief, To'uluwa, for instance, was genuinely attached to his wife, Kadamwasila. But affection, in some cases, is not sufficient to stand against the stress of circumstance. Thus Mitakata and Orayayse, an exemplary couple when I first knew them in 1915, were forced apart by the quarrel between the husband and the wife's kinsman, Namwana Guya'u (ch. i, sec. 2). Two of the finest looking people whom I knew in the Trobriands, Tomeda of Kasana'i, and his wife, Sayabiya, whom I had supposed most tenderly attached during my first visit, were already divorced on my return. But the existence of attachments lasting into old age shows that conjugal affection in the Trobriands can be real, even though perhaps it is not always deep.

I seldom witnessed quarrels or heard bad language among married people. If a woman is a shrew (*uriweri*) and the husband not sufficiently dominated to bear the fact meekly, or *vice versa*, marriage is so easily dissolved that there is hardly ever an unsuccessful match which survives the first outbreak long. I can remember only two or three households, where relations between husband and wife were outwardly and chronically strained. Two married

people in Oburaku frequently indulged in lengthy quarrels, to such a degree that the matter became a serious nuisance to me and disturbed my field-work. As their hut was next door to my tent, I could hear all their domestic differences—it almost made me forget that I was among savages and imagine myself back among civilized people. Morovato, a reliable informant and friend of mine, was ordered about by his wife and badly henpecked, and I could cite perhaps one more really unfortunate marriage in Sinaketa. That there are fewer matches in which the man, and not the woman, is the aggressor in the quarrel is probably due to the fact that it is a rather more serious loss to a man to break up a good home than it is to a woman (see next chapter). A couple living in Liluta used to have difficulties owing to the man's aggressive and jealous temper. Once, when he scolded and ill-treated his wife very brutally for making *kula* (ceremonial exchange) of aromatic wreaths of the *butia* flower with another man, she went away to her own village. I saw an embassy of several men come from the husband to the wife, bringing her reconciliation presents (*lula*). This was the only case of wife-beating which actually occurred during my stay in Kiriwina, and it was done in a fit of jealousy.

2

ADULTERY AND SEXUAL JEALOUSY

Jealousy, with or without adequate reason, and adultery are the two factors in tribal life which put most strain on the marriage tie. In law, custom and public opinion,

sexual appropriation is exclusive. There is no lending of wives, no exchange, no waiving of marital rights in favour of another man. Any such breach of marital fidelity is as severely condemned in the Trobriands as it is in Christian principle and European law; indeed the most puritanical public opinion among ourselves is not more strict. Needless to say, however, the rules are as often and as easily broken, circumvented, and condoned as in our own society.

In the Trobriands the norms are strict, and though deviations from them are frequent, they are neither open nor, if discovered, unatoned; they are certainly never taken as a matter of course.

For example, in October, 1915, during one of the chief's long absences overseas, the village of Omarakana was put under the usual taboo. After sunset, no people were supposed to leave their houses, no young men from the neighbourhood were allowed to pass through, the village was deserted save for one or two old men who had been appointed to keep watch. Night after night, when I was out in search of information, I found the streets empty, the houses shut, and no lights to be seen. The village might have been dead. Nor could I get anyone from Omarakana or the neighbourhood to come to my tent. One morning before I was up, a great commotion arose at the other end of the village, and I could hear loud quarrelling and screaming. Startled, I hurried to make inquiries and was able to find one or two of my special friends in the angry, vociferating crowd, who told me what had occurred. Tokwaylabiga, one of the less

noble sons of To'uluwa, the chief, who had not accompanied his father, had left Omarakana on a visit. Returning before he was expected, he was told that his wife, Digiyagaya, had slept in his absence with another son of To'uluwa, Mwaydayle, and that they had that very morning gone together to the gardens, the woman taking her water-bottles as a pretext. He ran after them and, according to gossip, found them under compromising conditions, though the real facts will never be known. Tokwaylabiga, not a very bloodthirsty man, vented his passion and revenged himself on his wife by smashing all her water-bottles. Obviously a philosopher like M. Bergeret, he did not want to cause any serious trouble, and yet was not willing to suppress his injured feelings altogether. The commotion which had attracted my attention was the reception given to husband and wife on their return to the village; for the taboo had been broken, and all the citizens were out taking sides with one party or the other. The same evening I saw the outraged husband sitting beside his wife in perfect harmony.[1]

Another case of adultery has been previously mentioned in the account of Namwana Guya'u's expulsion. Rightly or wrongly, he suspected his father's nephew and heir, Mitakata, of having committed adultery with his wife, Ibomala. But he also did not push his conjugal vindictiveness beyond bringing the case before the white magistrate, and after he left the capital, he and his wife

[1] Another case of breach of the sexual taboo imposed on the village during the chief's absence has been described in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, p. 484. See also pp. 205-6 of that book.

were to be seen together in his own village apparently on excellent terms.

There are more serious cases of conjugal infidelity on record, however. In a small village near Omarakana, there lived a man called Dudubile Kautala, who died in 1916, apparently of old age, and whose funeral I attended. I remember his wife, Kayawa, as a terrible old hag, shrivelled like a mummy and smeared all over with grease and soot as a sign of mourning; and I can still feel the dreadful atmosphere pervading her little widow's cage, where I paid her a visit soon after her bereavement. History tells us, however, that once she was fair and tempting, so that men were driven to suicide for her. Molatagula, chief of a neighbouring village, was among those who succumbed to her beauty. One day, when the husband had gone to procure fish from a lagoon village, the love-sick chieftain entered Kayawa's house knowing her to be indoors—a gross breach of usage and manners. The story runs that Kayawa lay asleep naked upon her bed, offering a most alluring sight to the intruder, as the natives somewhat crudely put it. He approached her and took advantage of her sleep and helplessness, without, says my version, still gallantly partial to the lady, any connivance on her part. But when the husband returned, panting under a load of fish, he found them together. Both were undressed and there was more besides to compromise them. The adulterer tried to carry it off with effrontery, and said he had only come to fetch some fire. But the evidence was against him, and when the husband seized an axe, the offender tore a big hole in the thatch

and escaped. Public opinion was unfavourable and the villagers insulted and ridiculed Molatagula. So he took some of the fish poison which is, as a matter of fact, the resource of those who wish to leave a loop-hole in the suicide forced upon them. He was, in fact, saved by emetics, and lived in all honour and good health for some time afterwards.

A more tragic story is that told in Omarakana about a man called Taytapola, belonging to a generation now passed away. He caught his wife Bulukwau'ukwa in the very act of adultery with Molukwayawa, a man of the same village. The adulterer succeeded in making his escape. The husband pursued him spear in hand, but failing to overtake him, came back to his hut and blew the conch shell. His maternal kinsmen (*veyola*) rallied round him; and they all repaired to the adversary's end of the village, where they accused the culprit and insulted him in front of his sub-clan. A village fight ensued, the two principals facing each other, each supported by his kinsmen. The offender was speared and died. In such a case, the attack was probably concentrated on him personally, and the defence of the wrongdoer lacked the impetus of conviction.

Kouta'uya, a chief of the compound village of Sinaketa, went on a *kula* expedition to Gumasila.[1] One of his wives, Bogonela, had a lover, by name Kaukweda Guya'u. Both men are still alive and well known to me. The eldest wife of the absent chief, Pitaviyaka, was suspicious

[1] He and his sailings are familiar to readers of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*

of her fairer companion and watched her. Hearing a noise one night, she went to Bogonela's hut and found the two lovers together. A great scandal broke out in the village. The guilty wife was publicly harangued and insulted by the female relatives of her husband: "You like carnal pleasures too much; you are too fond of male charms." Bogonela did as the custom and ideal of personal honour dictated. In her best attire and adorned with all her valuable ornaments, she climbed a tall coconut palm on the central place of the village. Her little daughter, Kaniyaviyaka, stood under the tree and cried. Many people were assembled. She commended her child to the care of the eldest wife and jumped from the tree. She was killed on the spot.

There are many such stories which prove the existence of strong passions and complex sentiments among the natives. Thus a man of Sinaketa named Gumaluya was married to Kutawouya, but fell in love with Ilapakuna, and entered into a regular liaison with her. His wife refused to cook for him or to bring him water, so he had to receive these from a married sister. One evening, at the time when a village is socially astir with families sitting over their supper or gossiping round the fire, Kutawouya made a scene in public, and her scolding rang right through the village: "You are too fond of dissipation; you are in a constant state of sexual excitement; you never tire of copulation"; these were fragments of her speech, retailed to me in a vividly coloured narrative. She goaded herself into a fury, and insulted the man in such shocking words that he also became blinded by pas-

sion, and seized a stick and beat her into senselessness. Next day she committed suicide by taking the gall-bladder of the *soka* fish (a species of globe-fish), a poison which acts with lightning rapidity.

Isakapu, a fine-looking young woman, virtuous and hard-working, was, if we are to believe the testimony of historical gossip, quite faithful to her husband, yet wrongfully suspected by him. One day, returning home after a prolonged absence, he fell into a fury of jealousy; he accused and insulted her in a loud voice, and beat her mercilessly. She wept and lamented, crying: "I am sore all over, my head aches, my back aches, my buttocks ache. I shall climb a tree and jump down." A day or two after the quarrel, she adorned herself, climbed a tree and cried aloud to her husband: "Kabwaynaka, come here. Look at me as I see you. I never committed adultery. You beat and insulted me without reason. Now I shall kill myself." The husband tried to reach her in time to stop her, but when he was half-way up the tree, she threw herself down and thus ended her life.

For some reason Bolobesa, one of the wives of Numakala, the predecessor of the present chief of Omarakana, left her husband for a time and returned to her own village, Yalumugwa. Her maternal uncle, Gumabudi, chief of that village, sent her back to her husband. She refused to go and turned back again half-way, although, I was told, she quite intended to return to her husband ultimately. Her uncle insisted, and insulted her so grossly that she committed suicide.

In each of these cases it was open to the woman simply

to leave her husband; or, in the last quoted incident, to return to him. In each, she was evidently prevented from adopting this easy solution by some strong attachment, or by *amour propre* and a sense of personal honour. Death was preferable to life in the village where she had been dishonoured, preferable too to life in any other village. It was unbearable to live with the man, and impossible to live without him, a state of mind which, though it might seem incredible among savages whose sexual life is so easy and carnal, yet can exercise real influence on their married life.

3

THE ECONOMIC TRIBUTE FROM THE WIFE'S FAMILY

We now come to the most remarkable and, one might say, sociologically sensational feature of Trobriand marriage. It is so important that I have already had to anticipate my statement of it several times. Marriage puts the wife's family under a permanent tributary obligation to the husband, to whom they have to pay yearly contributions for as long as the household exists. From the moment when they signify by the first gift that they accept the marriage, they have to produce, year after year by their own labour, a quantity of yams for their kinswoman's family. The size of the offering varies with the status of both partners, but covers about half the annual consumption in an average household.

When, after their "honeymoon" in the boy's parental house, the couple set up for themselves, they have to erect a yam-store as well as a dwelling-hut, and the former,

as we know, will stand in the inner ring facing the latter. The yam-house has a ceremonial compartment, contained between the beams of a square well, and into this the annual contribution of the wife's family is regularly stowed at harvest. At the same time the master of the new household is himself delivering a large quantity of yams to his own sister or female relatives. He keeps for himself only the inferior tubers, stowed under the thatch in the top compartment and in the inferior yam-houses, *sokwaypa.* He also produces his own seed yams and all other vegetables: peas, pumpkins, *taro* and *viya.*

Thus everyone keeps back a fraction of his garden-yield for himself. The rest goes to his female relatives and their husbands. When a boy is young, his duty is to provide for his nearest female relative, his mother. Later on, he has to maintain his sister when she marries; or perhaps a maternal aunt, or a maternal aunt's daughter, if these have no nearer male kinsmen to provide for them.

There are several types of garden, each of a different nature and with a different name. There are the early gardens, *kaymugwa,* planted with mixed crops, which begin to yield new food after the last year's harvest has been exhausted. This keeps the household going until the new, main harvest has begun. And there is the *taro* garden, *tapopu.* Both of these every family makes for its own use. Then there is the main garden, *kaymata,* the yield of which is chiefly devoted to the supply of the female relatives. All that the man produces for his own use is called by the generic term *taytumwala;* what he

THE MARRIAGE TRIBUTE IN THE GARDEN

During a competitive harvest for the chief, people are admiring the yams arranged in the centre. Behind are one or two smaller heaps of inferior tubers, some of which have already been removed.

[*Ch. V*, 3]

CARRYING THE HARVEST GIFT

A small party, the men carrying the weight on their shoulders, the women on the head. At a competitive

grows for his women-folk and their husbands is called *urigubu*.

The harvest of the main gardens inaugurates a long and elaborate series of activities, associated with the offering of annual gifts. The members of each household—for digging is always done *en famille*—repair to their own garden-plot within the large, communal enclosure. The yams of the small variety, called *taytu*, which are by far the most important of all native vegetables, are then dug up by means of pointed sticks and carried to a shady arbour (*kalimomyo*) made of poles and yam vine, where the family group sit down and carefully clean the dug-up tubers, shaking the earth from them and shaving off the hairs with sharpened shells. Then a selection is made. The best yams are placed in a large conical heap in the middle, and this is the *urigubu* yield (see pl. 27). The rest are stowed away in the corners in less regular and much smaller heaps. The main heap is constructed with almost geometrical precision, with the best yams carefully distributed all over its surface, for it will remain in the little shed for some time, to be admired by people from the village and neighbouring communities. All this part of the work, which, as can easily be seen, has no utilitarian value, is done eagerly, with interest and *con amore*, under the stimulus of vanity and ambition. The chief pride of a Trobriander is to gain renown as a "master-gardener" (*tokway-bagula*). And to achieve this, he will make great efforts and till many plots in order to produce a considerable number of heaps with a large quantity of

yams in each. It must also be remembered that the marriage gift is the chief and most ostentatious product of the garden work.

In about a week or a fortnight, the *taytu* (small yams) are brought in from the gardens to the village. The owner then engages a number of helpers—men, women, and children—to carry the gift to his sister's husband, perhaps right at the other end of the district (pl. 28). These put on semi-festive dress (see pl. 61), paint their faces, adorn themselves with flowers and set out in a merry crowd; this is a time for gaiety and rejoicing. The carrier parties walk about all over the gardens, inspect and admire or criticize the crops. Perhaps a man, through special luck or excess of zeal in labour, has an outstandingly good yield, and the renown (*butura*) of this has spread. Or there may be a famous master-gardener in the village, and his crops have to be viewed and compared with his previous achievements. Sometimes a village community, or several of them, agree to have a *kayasa* (competitive) harvest, and all strive to the utmost to do themselves and their community credit. The rivalry is so strong that in old days there was seldom a *kayasa* harvest without a war, or at least fights, to follow.

The gardens have a picturesque and festive appearance at this time. The uprooted heaps of *taytu* vine litter the soil with large, decorative leaves, shaped like those of the fig or of the grape. Among them groups of people are seated cleaning the yams and arranging them, while gay parties of sightseers come and go through the welter of leaves. The copper-colour of their bodies, the red and

gold of the girls' gala petticoats, the crimson of the hibiscus, the pale yellow pandanus, and the green of the garlands of trailing foliage, catching at limb or breast, make up a half Bacchic, half idyllic South Sea pastoral.

After they have rested and admired the gardens, the crowd of carriers engaged for the occasion repair to the owner's plot. There the yams are dealt out and measured with a standard basket. For each basketful, a small petal is torn off a cycas leaf. Each tenth petal is left standing, to mark the tithe. For a big plot, several cycas leaves may have to be used. The carriers then proceed to the recipient's village, men and women mixing together, with jokes and laughter. The owner supplies them with dainties on the road: cocoa-drinks to quench their thirst, betel-nut as a stimulant, succulent bananas to refresh them. The village is entered at high speed; the men run ahead, pandanus petals streaming from their armlets, and the women follow closely. As they come among the houses, a collective litany is shouted, the fore-runner repeating a series of meaningless traditional words very quickly at the top of his voice: "*Bomgoy, yakakoy, siyaloy* . . ." while the whole crowd thunder back in unison a loud and strident "Yah." Then in front of the recipient's yam-house, they build the yams into a circular heap, quite as fine as the one made before in the garden (pl. 29). It is only after a few days that the next ceremonial event takes place, when the vegetables are removed to the inside of the yam-house.

Returning now to the sociological and economic importance of the annual marriage endowment, it has very

considerable effect not only on the marriage institution itself, but on the whole economy and constitution of the tribe. Looked at from the point of view of the recipient, it is clear that every man has to guide his marital choice according to his needs, and to his prospective wife's endowment. For he will be dependent, not only on his own industry and capacity, but also on that of his relatives-in-law. A fortune-hunter will lay siege to a girl who is the only sister of several brothers—the very existence of whom would at once cool the ardour of a European with a similar end in view. Only a man who could face destitution with equanimity would court a girl who had several sisters and but a single brother. As a man's wife bears sons and they grow up, he acquires as it were home-made relatives-in-law—for in a matrilineal society children are naturally classed with relatives-in-law—and their first duty is to provide for the parental household. Ordinarily the husband receives the main part of his wife's endowment from one relative-in-law only; but in the case of a chief or a man of importance, though one man will nominally be responsible, many others will co-operate with him to provide a suitable gift. Even a commoner, however, receives, besides the *urigubu* from his chief donor, a number of smaller gifts named *kovisi* or *taytupeta* from his wife's other relatives. They are all presented at harvest time and consist of several baskets of yams and other vegetables.

A man also receives from his relatives-in-law various services, given as occasion demands. They have to assist him when he builds a house or canoe, arranges for a

fishing expedition, or takes part in one of the public festivals. In illness, they must keep watch over him against sorcerers, or carry him to some other place where he hopes to get better. In feuds or in other emergencies he may, given certain circumstances, command their services. Finally, after his death, the bulk of mortuary duties will fall upon them. Only from time to time has the man to repay the annual services of his relatives-in-law by a gift of valuables—such occasional gifts being called *youlo*.

The most interesting question about this institution of annual harvest gifts, and the most difficult to understand, is this: what are the legal, social, or psychological forces which impel a man to give freely and liberally year after year, and to strain his working power to the utmost in so doing? The answer is: tribal custom and personal pride. There are no definite punishments to enforce this duty; those who neglect it merely sink in the public esteem and have to bear public contempt.

A Trobriander is extremely ambitious and there are two points at which his ambition is specially sensitive. One of them is his family pride. A man's sister is his nearest relation, and her honour, her position and her dignity he identifies with his own. The other point of honour is concerned with food supply. Scarcity of food, hunger, lack of superabundance are considered very shameful indeed.[1] Thus, when it is necessary to uphold the honour of his family by providing his sister with food, a Trobriander, unless he is entirely devoid of de-

[1] For this psychology of food honour, compare *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, esp. ch. vi, and *Crime and Custom*.

cency and morality, works with a will. When his sister's husband is a man of higher rank than himself, then all the weight of the latter's prestige is added to the stimulus of ambition; and if the husband is of a rank lower than himself, then the sister's status must be the more enhanced. In short, the sense of what is right, the pressure of public opinion, and inequalities of rank in either direction, produce strong psychological incentives which only in very rare and exceptional cases fail in their effect.

From the point of view of tribal economy, this system of annual marriage endowment introduces extraordinary elements of complication: there is all the additional work associated with display and ceremonial offering; there is the sorting, cleaning, and arrangement of the heaps; there is the building of an arbour. In addition there is the work of transport, which is sometimes very considerable; for a man has to make his garden in the place where he lives and to transport the produce to his brother-in-law's village, perhaps six or eight miles away at the other end of the district. Sometimes, where the distance is exceptionally great, a few hundred basketfuls of yams have to be carried in relays to a coastal village, transported thence by canoe, and afterwards carried again. It is easy to see the enormous amount of waste involved in all this. But if a benevolent white reformer, and there are, alas, many such at work even in the Trobriands, tried to break down the native system, the good would be very doubtful and the harm most certain. In general, the destruction of any tribal custom is subversive of order and morals. And

more than this: if we examine the roundabout methods of native economy more closely, we see that they provide a powerful incentive to industrial efficiency. If he worked just to satisfy his own immediate wants, and had only the spur of directly economic considerations, the native, who has no means of capitalizing his surplus, would have no incentive to produce it. The deep-rooted motives of ambition, honour, and moral duty have raised him to a relatively high level of efficiency and organization which, at seasons of drought and scarcity, allows him to produce just enough to tide over the calamity.

In this extraneous economic endowment of households, we see again the dual workings of father-right and matriliny. The husband is only partially the head of the household; he is also only partially its provider. His wife's brother, who according to tribal law remains the guardian of the wife and her children, has heavy economic duties towards the household. Thus there is an economic counterpart to the wife's brother's interference with household affairs. Or in other words, the husband, through his marriage, acquires an economic lien on his male relatives-in-law, while they, in exchange for their services, retain a legal authority over the wife and her children. This, of course, is a formulation in abstract terms of the state of affairs as the sociologist sees it, and contains no hypothesis as to the relative priority in time or importance of father-right and mother-right. Nor does it represent the point of view of the natives, who would be incapable of producing such an abstract formula.

4

POLYGAMY OF CHIEFS

Monogamy is so much the rule among the Trobrianders, that our treatment of their marriage customs has, so far, assumed the existence of one wife only. In a way this is not misleading, since if a man has several wives, all that has been said refers to each union separately. But a few supplementary notes must be added on plurality of wives. Polygamy (*vilayawa*) is allowed by custom to people of higher rank or to those of great importance, such as, for instance, the sorcerers of renown. In certain cases, indeed, a man is obliged to have a great number of wives by virtue of his position. This is so with every chief, that is to say, every headman of high rank who exercises an over-rule in a more or less extended district. In order to wield his power and to fulfil the obligations of his position, he must possess wealth, and this in Trobriand social conditions is possible only through plurality of wives.

It is a very remarkable fact in the constitution of the tribe of which we are speaking, that the source of power is principally economic, and that the chief is able to carry out many of his executive functions and to claim certain of his privileges only because he is the wealthiest man in the community. A chief is entitled to receive tokens of high respect, to command observance and require services; he can ensure the participation of his subjects in war, in any expedition and in any festival; but he needs to pay

THE "URIGUBU" IN THE VILLAGE

The carriers arrange the yams again into a conical heap in front of the store-house, to which they will be transferred after a time.

[*Ch. V*, 3]

A Polygamous Family

The chief To'uluwa during a canoe launching festivity on the beach of Omarakana seated on a plat-

heavily for all these things. He has to give great feasts and finance all enterprises by feeding the participants and rewarding the chief actors. Power in the Trobriands is essentially plutocratic. And a no less remarkable and unexpected feature of this system of government is that, although the chief needs a large revenue, there is nothing of the sort directly attached to his office: no substantial tributes are paid him by the inhabitants as from subject to chief. The small annual offerings or tribute in special dainties—the first fish caught, vegetable primitiæ, special nuts and fruits—are by no means a source of revenue; in fact the chief has to repay them at full value. For his real income he has to rely entirely on his annual marriage contribution. This, however, in his case, is very large, for he has many wives, and each of them is far more richly dowered than if she had married a commoner.

A statement of the specific conditions will make matters clearer. Each chief has a tributary district comprising several villages—a few dozen in the case of Kiriwina; a dozen or so in Luba or Tilataula; one or two in the cases of some minor chiefs—and this district is tributary through marriage. Each subject community renders a considerable contribution to the chief, but only and exclusively in the form of a dowry, paid annually in yams. Each village—and in the case of a compound village each constituent part of it—is "owned" by a sub-clan (see ch. i, sec. 2) and ruled by the headman of that sub-clan. From every one of these sub-clans the chief takes a wife and she is, as it were, perpetual, since on her death another wife, her substitute (*kaymapula*), is immediately wed to

him from the same sub-clan. To the dowry of this one woman, the chosen representative of the sub-clan, all its male members contribute their share, though the whole is presented collectively by the headman. Thus every man in a district works for his chief, but he works for him as for his relative-in-law, however distant.

The headman of Omarakana, and chief of Kiriwina, is supreme in rank, power, extent of influence and renown. His tributary grasp, now considerably restricted by white men and crippled by the disappearance of some villages, used to reach all over the northern half of the island and comprise about five dozen communities, villages, or sub-divisions of villages, which yielded him up to sixty wives (of whom a remnant may be seen on pl. 30). Each of these brought him in a substantial yearly income in yams. Her family had to fill one or two storehouses each year (pl. 31) containing roughly five to six tons of yams. The chief would receive from 300 to 350 tons of yams per annum.[1] The quantity which he disposes of is certainly sufficient to provide enormous feasts, to pay craftsmen for making precious ornaments, to finance wars and oversea expeditions, to hire dangerous sorcerers and assassins—to do all, in short, which is expected of a person in power.

Thus wealth emphatically forms the basis of power, though in the case of the supreme chief of Omarakana, it is reinforced by personal prestige, by the respect due to

[1] This rough computation was made for me by a trader who was engaged among other things in exporting yams for the mainland plantations. As I was unable to check it, it must be received with caution.

his tabooed or holy character, and by his possession of the dreaded weather magic through which he can make or mar the prosperity of the whole country. The smaller chiefs have usually only a few villages to draw upon; the smallest merely the other component parts of their own settlement. In every case their power and status depend entirely on their privilege of polygamy and on the exceptionally rich dowry due to a woman who marries a chief.

This account though short and necessarily incomplete will yet be sufficient to indicate the enormous and manifold influence of marriage and polygamy on the constitution of power and on the whole of social organization in the Trobriands.[1]

5

THE DOMESTIC ASPECT OF POLYGAMY

Turning now to the domestic aspect of polygamy, let us consider the steps by which a chief acquires his several wives. It will be best to take a specific instance; that of To'uluwa, for example. He began his sexual life in the ordinary way, passing through the stages of complete freedom, then of a liaison in the *bukumatula*, and finally of a permanent attachment. His first choice fell on Kadamwasila, of the clan of Lukwasisiga, the sub-clan Kwaynama of Osapola village (see pl. 4 and diag. in ch. iv, sec. 5). It was quite a suitable match, for this sub-

[1] I cannot enter here more deeply into the political nature of chieftainship; I have treated the subject somewhat more fully elsewhere (*Argonauts*, ch. ii, sec. v, pp. 62-70). Nor can I deal *in extenso* with the economic aspect of power; this has been examined in "The Primitive Economics of the Trobriand Islanders," *Economic Journal*, March, 1921.

clan is the very one from which a Tabalu chief ought to choose his principal wife. The girl must have been very good-looking, and she certainly was a "real lady," possessing charm, dignity, and simple honesty. The two were deeply attached to each other and remained so; and the union was blessed by five boys and a girl, the youngest child. I have called Kadamwasila "the chief's favourite wife," meaning by that that theirs was a union of love, a real companionship, and undoubtedly in its early years, a passionate relation. The chief, however, even before his accession, took to himself other wives, each from one of the communities which have to supply him with an annual contribution. It often happens that when a chief's wife dies, the community from which she came supplies the heir apparent, instead of the actual chief himself, with a girl who counts as substitute for the deceased. To'uluwa had become possessed of three or four wives of this kind, when his elder brother and predecessor died. Then he inherited the late chief's widows, who automatically and immediately became his wives, while their children became part of his household. The majority of the widows were fairly old, some having passed through the hands of three husbands. It seems that the chief would not have any obligation to live sexually with such inherited wives, but of course he could do so if he wished. Subsequently To'uluwa married four other wives, from such communities as were not represented among his complement at the time. The marriage of a chief does not differ from that of a commoner, except that his wife is

brought to him by her parents openly, and that the gifts exchanged are more substantial.

At present a stop is being gradually put to the whole system of the chief's polygamy. The first administrators, benevolently conceited and megalomaniacally sensitive as all those with arbitrary power over an "inferior" race are apt to be, were not guided by any sympathetic understanding of native custom and institutions. They did not grope, but proceeded at once to hit about them in the dark. They tried to destroy such native power as they found, instead of using it and working through it. Polygamy, a practice uncongenial to a European mind and indeed regarded by it as a sort of gross indulgence, seemed a weed proper for extirpation. So the chiefs, and especially he of Omarakana, though allowed to retain such wives as they had, were forbidden to fill the place left by each death, as would have been done in olden days. This prohibition was, by the way, an arbitrary act on the part of the white Resident, since it was justified by no law or regulation of the colony.[1] Now To'uluwa's wealth and influence are declining, and would already have ceased to exist if it had not been for the faithful obedience of his subjects to native custom. They were openly encouraged to forgo payment of the annual gifts, and the wives were invited to leave their husband;

[1] I am unable to say whether the Magistrate's taboo on polygamy was ever embodied in a definite statement or order, or only verbally given to the natives. But I know that chiefs and headmen have not acquired recently any new wives and that they not only allege, as a reason for this, a taboo from the white authorities, but they are genuinely afraid of defying this taboo, and also deeply resent it.

but so far loyalty and tradition have prevailed. At the death of the present chief, however, a complete disorganization is sure to take place among the natives of the Trobriands, and is certain to be followed by a gradual disintegration of culture and extinction of the race.[1]

Returning to the chief's household, it is clear that his relations with his different wives cannot be the same. Three classes of these latter may be roughly distinguished.

The first of these consists of wives acquired from his predecessor, a man much older than himself. These should be regarded as dowager tribute-bringers, who cannot be repudiated, and are living in dignity and retirement, but hardly exercise sexual allurement. Some of them, indeed, play an important rôle and enjoy a high degree of prestige. The eldest wife of To'uluwa, Bokuyoba (fourth from right on pl. 30), whom he inherited from his elder brother, has, though childless, a right of precedence in many matters, and is considered the head of the *giyovila* (chief's wives) whenever, for ceremonial or festival purposes or during private receptions, they act as a body. Next come Bomiyototo, Bomidabobu, and others, and there is also Namtauwa, mother of two strapping fellows, sons of the last chief, who take next place after To'uluwa's own sons. The chief has probably never actually lived sexually with these venerable relicts of the former régime.

The second class of wives are those whom the chief

[1] Cf. the excellent analysis of such conditions in other parts of Melanesia in G. Pitt-Rivers's *Clash of Culture*, pp. 134 sq. and *passim*.

married in his youth, women acquired and not inherited. There is usually one favourite among these: Kadamwasila filled this position in youth, and in her old age she was highly respected and had considerable influence. This influence was exercised directly and also indirectly through her sons, one of whom is the banished Namwana Guya'u.

The third class consists of younger women, adopted in exchange for such older ones as have died. Some of them are really pretty, for the most attractive women are always chosen for the chief. The method of choice is simple; the chief simply indicates which of the girls pleases him best, and, irrespective of her previous attachments, she is given to him. With these younger women their husband unquestionably has sexual intercourse, but the same degree of intimacy and companionship as with the wives of his youth does not, as a rule, obtain.

The latest acquisition of To'uluwa, Ilaka'ise (second from right on pl. 30, and on pl. 31) is one of the best-looking girls in the Trobriands. But the chief is seldom seen in her company. Isupwana (pl. 18), the eldest of the third class of acquisitions, really stands on the borderline between the second and the last category. She is the present favourite of the chief, and is often to be seen with him in the garden, or on visits, or in front of his personal hut. But he always used to prefer to take his meals at the house of Kadamwasila during her life-time, and—apart from his own personal hut—made it his home.

The outward relations of the chief's wives towards each other are noticeably good. Nor could I discover from indiscreet village gossip the existence of any vio-

lent rivalries and hatreds among them. Bokuyoba, the oldest wife, who, as has been said, enjoyed a privileged position among them, is undoubtedly popular and liked by them all. She is also supposed to keep an eye on their morals, a somewhat invidious task which always falls to the oldest wife. It will be remembered that Pitaviyaka, the first wife of Kouta'uya, one of the chiefs of Sinaketa, actually discovered an act of adultery among her colleagues, a discovery which, as we have seen, ended so tragically in the suicide of the guilty one. In Omarakana, however, the first wife is less of a Mrs. Grundy.

Scandal reports many breaches of marital fidelity among To'uluwa's wives, especially and naturally on the part of the youngest ones. The point on which village gossip centres its most eager and malicious interest is the fact that several of the most prominent sons of the chief himself are among the adulterers. Of course, this relation has not the same incestuous flavour as it would possess for us, since the bodily tie between father and son is not recognized; but it is bad enough to scandalize the natives, or rather to arouse their interest by its piquancy. Ilaka'ise, the youngest wife, a girl of not more than twenty-five and, with her tall figure, soft and well-developed contour, and shapely face, a model of Melanesian beauty, has a permanent intrigue with Yobukwa'u. He is the third son of To'uluwa and Kadamwasila, and one of the finest-looking, best-mannered, and really most satisfactory fellows of my acquaintance. As the reader may remember, he has recently married a girl who is not his equal either in character or in personal charm

(see ch. iv, sec. 1). His friends smiled at the suggestion that his marriage might mean a rupture with Ilaka'ise.

Isupwana, the chief's favourite of his younger wives and a woman who has the air of a stately yet comely matron, is enamoured, among others, of Yabugibogi, a young son of the chief. This youth, though good-looking enough and endowed, according to the scandal-mongers, with great attractions for a jaded feminine taste, is perhaps the most obnoxious waster in the whole community.

Namwana Guya'u, the eldest son of Kadamwasila and his father's favourite, does not consider this fact a sufficient reason for being more abstemious than his brothers. He has chosen Bomawise for his mistress, the least attractive of the few younger wives of his father. Both before his marriage and after it, he lived in a faithful though incestuous relation with her, which only ended with his banishment.

The greatest scandal of all was caused by Gilayviyaka, the second son of Kadamwasila, a fine and intelligent native, who died soon after my first departure from the Trobriands. Unfortunately for himself, he married a very attractive girl, Bulubwaloga, who seems to have been passionately fond and very jealous of him. Before his marriage, he had an intrigue with Nabwoyuma, one of his father's wives, and did not break it off after the wedding. His wife suspected and spied upon him. One night, the guilty couple were caught *in flagrante delicto* in Nabwoyuma's own hut by the adulterer's wife. The alarm was given, and a dreadful public scandal ensued.

The outraged wife left the village immediately. A great social upheaval took place in Omarakana, and a permanent estrangement ensued between the father and son. For, though the chief probably knows a good deal of what goes on and condones it, once a scandal becomes public, custom demands the punishment of the offenders. In olden days they would have been speared, or destroyed by sorcery or poison. Now that the chief's power is paralysed, nothing so drastic can happen; but Gilayviyaka had to leave the village for some time, and after his return was always under a cloud. His wife never returned to him. The chief's wife remained with a stain on her character, and in great disfavour with her husband.

I heard many other items of scandalous gossip which space forbids me to retail. It is sufficient to say that the behaviour of the eldest sons of Kadamwasila is typical. The chief's other male children seem to have no such permanent intrigues with special wives, but they are not held in greater public esteem because of that, since they are known to take any opportunity of a temporary affair with any one of their father's wives. Nowadays, when the law and the moral pretence of the white rule have done much to rot away the real morality and sense of what is right among the natives, all these inter-family adulteries are committed much more openly and shamelessly. But, even in the old days, as some of my more ancient informants told me with a reminiscent smile, the young wives of an old chief would never suffer a sad lot in resignation, and would always seek comfort, with dis-

cretion, but not without success. Polygamy in the Trobriands was never a cruel and inhuman institution.

In this chapter we have discussed marriage in its domestic aspect, and in the aspect of the economic and legal obligations which it imposes on the wife's family with regard to the household. Finally we have discussed the effect on public and political life which it exerts through the fact of the chief's polygamy. In the next chapter we shall see what light is thrown on marriage in the Trobriands by the modes of its dissolution through divorce and death.

CHAPTER VI

DIVORCE AND THE DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE BY DEATH

The nature of matrimonial bonds reveals itself in their breaking in life by divorce, as it does also in their dissolution by death. In the first instance we can observe the strain to which they are submitted; we can see where they are strong enough to resist and where they most easily yield. In the second we can estimate the strength of the social ties and the depth of personal sorrow by their expression in the ceremonial of mourning and burial.

I

DIVORCE

Divorce, called by the natives *vaypaka* (*vay* = marriage; *paka*, from *payki*, to refuse), is not infrequent. Whenever husband and wife disagree too acutely, or whenever bitter quarrels or fierce jealousy makes them chafe too violently at the bond between them, this can be dissolved—provided the emotional situation does not lead instead to a more tragic issue (see sec. 2 of the previous chapter). We have seen why this solution, or rather dissolution, of the difficulty is a weapon used by the woman rather than the man. A husband very seldom repudiates his wife, though in principle he is entitled to

A Chief's Wife and Her Annual Dowry

Ilaka'ise in front of the store-houses which yearly have to be filled at harvest by her brothers and maternal kinsmen.

[*Ch. V*, 4; *also ch. I*, 2]

PLATE 32

DECORATED CORPSE

Body of a young and beautiful woman carried off by sudden death and sincerely mourned by the widower, who is seen supporting the corpse for the photograph. Her face is painted; shell necklaces, belt and armlets adorn her; she wears elaborate coloured skirts. Her legs have been tied, but not her arms, nor have her nostrils, etc., yet been stuffed with fibre.

[*Ch. VI*, 3]

do so. For adultery, he has the right to kill her; but the usual punishment is a thrashing, or perhaps merely remonstrance or a fit of the sulks. If he has any other serious grievance against her, such as bad temper or laziness, the husband, who is little hampered by marriage ties, easily finds consolation outside his household, while he still benefits by the marriage tribute from his wife's relatives.

There are, on the other hand, several instances on record of a woman leaving her husband because of ill-treatment or infidelity on his part, or else because she had become enamoured of someone else. Thus, to take a case already described, when Bulubwaloga caught her husband, Gilayviyaka, *in flagrante delicto* with his father's wife, she left him and returned to her family (see ch. v, sec. 5). Again, a woman married to Gomaya, the ne'er-do-well successor to one of the petty chiefs of Sinaketa, left him because, in his own words, she found him an adulterer and also "very lazy." Bolobesa, the wife of the previous chief of Omarakana, left him because she was dissatisfied or jealous, or just tired of him (ch. v, sec. 2). Dabugera, the grand-niece of the present chief, left her first husband because she discovered his infidelities and found him, moreover, not to her taste. Her mother, Ibo'una, the chief's grand-niece, took as a second husband one Iluwaka'i, a man of Kavataria and at that time interpreter to the resident magistrate. When he lost his position she abandoned him, not only, we may presume, because he was less good-looking without his uniform, but also because power attracts the fair sex in the Trobriands

as elsewhere. These two ladies of rank display an exacting taste in husbands, and indeed the fickleness of those privileged by birth has become proverbial in the Trobriands: "She likes the phallus as a woman of *guya'u* (chief) rank does."

But among people of lower rank, also, there are many instances of a woman leaving her husband simply because she does not like him. During my first visit to the Trobriands, Sayabiya, a fine-looking girl, bubbling over with health, vitality, and temperament, was quite happily married to Tomeda, who was a handsome, good-natured and honest, but stupid man. When I returned, she had gone back to live in her village as an unmarried girl, simply because she was tired of her husband. A very good-looking girl of Oburaku, Bo'usari, had left two husbands, one after the other, and, to judge from her intrigues, was looking for a third. Neither from her, nor from the intimate gossip of the village, could I get any good reason for her two desertions, and it was obvious that she simply wanted to be free again.

Sometimes extraneous conditions, more especially quarrels between the husband and the wife's family, lead to divorce. Thus as one result of the quarrel between Namwana Guya'u and Mitakata, Orayayse, Mitakata's wife, had to leave her husband because she belonged to his enemy's family. In a dispute between two communities, marriages are often dissolved for the same reason.

An interesting case of matrimonial misfortune which led to divorce is that of Bagido'u, the heir apparent of Omarakana (pl. 64). His first wife and her son died,

and he then married Dakiya, an extremely attractive woman who bore traces of her good looks even at the somewhat mature age at which I first saw her. Dakiya's younger sister Kamwalila was married to Manimuwa, a renowned sorcerer of Wakayse. Kamwalila sickened, and her sister Dakiya went to nurse her. Then between her and her sister's husband evil things began. He made love magic over her. Her mind was influenced, and they committed adultery then and there. When, after her sister's death, Dakiya returned to her husband Bagido'u, matters were not as before. He found his food tough, his water brackish, the coconut drinks bitter, and the betel nut without a bite in it. He would also discover small stones and bits of wood in his lime pot, twigs lying about in the road where he used to pass, pieces of foreign matter in his food. He sickened and grew worse and worse, for all these substances were, of course, vehicles of evil magic, performed by his enemy, the sorcerer Manimuwa, assisted in this by the faithless wife. In the meantime, his wife trysted with her leman.

Bagido'u scolded and threatened her until one day she ran away and went to live with Manimuwa, an altogether irregular procedure. The power of the chiefs being now only a shadow, Bagido'u could not use special force to bring her back; so he took another wife—a broad-faced, sluggish, and somewhat cantankerous person by the name of Dagiribu'a. Dakiya remained with her wizard lover, and married him. The unfortunate Bagido'u who obviously suffers from consumption, a disease with which all his family are more or less tainted, attributes his ills to

his successful rival's sorcery, even now, as he believes, active against him. This is very galling, for he has the injury of black magic added to the insult of his wife's seduction. When I came back to Omarakana in 1918, I found my friend Bagido'u much worse. By now (1928), this man of extraordinary intelligence, good manners, and astounding memory, the last worthy depository of the family tradition of the Tabalu, is no doubt dead.

The formalities of divorce are as simple as those by which marriage is contracted. The woman leaves her husband's house with all her personal belongings, and moves to her mother's hut, or to that of her nearest maternal kinswoman. There she remains, awaiting the course of events, and in the meantime enjoying full sexual freedom. Her husband, as likely as not, will try to get her back. He will send certain friends with "peace offerings" (*koluluvi*, or *lula*) for the wife and for those with whom she is staying. Sometimes the gifts are rejected at first, and then the ambassadors are sent again and again. If the woman accepts them, she has to return to her husband, divorce is ended and marriage resumed. If she means business, and is determined not to go back to her wedded life, the presents are never accepted; then the husband has to adjust himself as best he may, which means that he begins to look for another girl. The dissolution of marriage entails in no case the restitution of any of the inaugural marriage gifts exchanged, unless, as we shall see, the divorced woman should remarry.

The girl, if she is still young enough, now resumes her prenuptial life and leads the free, untrammelled

existence of a *nakubukwabuya* (unmarried girl), entering upon liaison after liaison, and living in bachelors' houses. One of the liaisons may lengthen out and develop into a new marriage. Then the new husband must present a valuable object (*vaygu'a*) to his predecessor, in recompense for the one given to the wife's family at the beginning of the first marriage. The new husband must also give another *vaygu'a* to his wife's relatives, and he then receives from them the first annual harvest gift—*vilakuria*—and the subsequent yearly tribute in yams. It seemed to me that a divorcée was much more independent of family interference in choosing her new husband than an ordinary unmarried girl. The initial gifts of food (*pepe'i*, etc.) are not given in the case of such a remarriage. There is, apparently, no social stigma on a girl or a man who has been married and divorced, although as a matter of *amour propre* no one wishes to own that he or she has been abandoned by the other.

It goes without saying that the children, in case of divorce, always follow their mother; and this is no doubt another reason why divorce is less popular with men than with women. During the interim, when their mother is living as a spinster, they remain in the household of her nearest married maternal relative.

2

DEATH AND THE BEREAVED

When a man dies, his wife is not set free by the event. It may be said without paradox that, in a way, the strictest and heaviest shackles of marriage are laid on her after

the real tie has been dissolved by death. Custom compels her to play the burdensome rôle of chief mourner; to make an ostentatious, dramatic, and extremely onerous display of grief for her husband from the moment of his demise until months, at times years, afterwards. She has to fulfil her part under the vigilant eyes of the public, jealous of exact compliance with traditional morals, and under the more suspicious surveillance of the dead man's kindred, who regard it as a special and grievous offence to their family's honour if she flags for a single moment in her duty. The same applies in a smaller degree to a widower, but in his case the mourning is less elaborate and burdensome, and the vigilance not so relentless.

The ritual in the early stages of widowhood reveals in a direct and intimate manner a most interesting complex of ideas—some very crude and quaint—concerning kinship, the nature of marriage, and the purely social ties between father and children. The whole mortuary ritual is, in fact, perhaps the most difficult and bewildering aspect of Trobriand culture for the investigating sociologist. In the overgrowth of ceremonial, in the inextricable maze of obligations and counter-obligations, stretching out into a long series of ritual acts, there is to be found a whole world of conceptions—social, moral, and mythological—the majority of which struck me as quite unexpected and difficult to reconcile with the generally accepted views of the human attitude towards death and mourning.

Throughout this ritual, the unfortunate remains of the man are constantly worried. His body is twice exhumed; it is cut up; some of its bones are peeled out of the car-

cass, are handled, are given to one party and then to another, until at last they come to a final rest. And what makes the whole performance most disconcerting is the absence of the real protagonist—Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. For the spirit of the dead man knows nothing about all that happens to his body and bones, and cares less, since he is already leading a happy existence in Tuma, the netherworld, having breathed of the magic of oblivion and formed new ties (see ch. xii, sec. 5). The ritual performances at his twice-opened grave and over his buried remains, and all that is done with his relics, are merely a social game, where the various groupings into which the community has re-crystallized at his death play against each other. This, I must add with great emphasis, represents the actual contemporary view of the natives, and contains no hypothetical reference to the origins or past history of this institution. Whether the dead man always had his spiritual back turned on the Trobriand mortuary ritual, or whether his spirit has gradually evaporated from it—it is not for the field-worker to decide. In this context we shall have to confine ourselves to the study of mortuary practices in their barest outline only. A complete account of them would easily fill a volume of the present size. We shall, therefore, select such features as throw light on the ties of marriage, and on the ideas of kinship and relationship; and even this will have to be done in a somewhat schematic and simplified form.[1]

[1] Compare the brief account of these ceremonies among the Northern Massim, by Professor C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea.*

Let us take the death of a man of consequence in the fulness of age, leaving behind a widow, several children and brothers. From the moment of his death, the distinction between his real, that is matrilineal, kinsmen (*veyola*) on the one hand, and his children, relatives-in-law and friends on the other, takes on a sharp and even an outwardly visible form. The kinsmen of the deceased fall under a taboo; they must keep aloof from the corpse. They are not allowed either to wash or adorn or fondle or bury it; for if they were to touch or to come near it, pernicious influences from the body would attack them and cause their disease and death. These pernicious influences are conceived in the form of a material exhalation, issuing from the corpse and polluting the air. It is called *bwaulo*, a word which also designates the cloud of smoke which surrounds a village especially on steamy, calm days. The necrogenic *bwaulo*, invisible to common eyes, appears to a witch or sorcerer as a black cloud shrouding the village. It is innocuous to strangers, but dangerous to kinsmen (ch. xiii, sec. 1).

The kindred must also not display any outward signs of mourning in costume and ornamentation, though they need not conceal their grief and may show it by weeping. Here the underlying idea is that the maternal kinsmen (*veyola*) are hit in their own persons; that each one suffers because the whole sub-clan to which they belong has been maimed by the loss of one of its members. "As if a limb were cut off, or a branch lopped from a tree." Thus, though they need not hide their grief, they must not parade it. This abstention from outward mourning

extends, not only to all the members of the sub-clan beyond the real kinsmen, but to all the members of the clan to which the dead man belonged. On the other hand, the taboo against touching the corpse applies primarily to the members of the sub-clan and especially to the actual kinsmen, to whom, of course, the temptation to touch the corpse, as an expression of love, would be strongest.

Quite different, in the native idea, is the relation of the widow, and of the children and relatives-in-law, to the dead and to his corpse. They ought, according to the moral code, to suffer and to feel bereaved. But in feeling thus they are not suffering directly; they are not grieving for a loss which affects their own sub-clan (*dala*) and therefore their own persons. Their grief is not spontaneous like that of the *veyola* (maternal kinsmen), but a duty almost artificial, springing as it does from acquired obligations. Therefore they must ostentatiously express their grief, display it, and bear witness to it by outward signs. If they did not, they would offend the surviving members of the dead man's sub-clan. Thus an interesting situation develops, giving rise to a most strange spectacle: a few hours after the death of a notable, the village is thronged by people, with their heads shaven, the whole body thickly smeared with soot, and howling like demons in despair. And these are the non-kinsmen of the dead man, the people not actually bereaved. In contrast to these a number of others are to be seen in their usual attire, outwardly calm and behaving as if nothing had happened. These represent the sub-clan and clan of the deceased, and are the actually bereaved. Thus by a devious

reasoning, tradition and custom produce the reverse of what would seem natural and obvious to us or any observer from almost any other culture.

Among those who display their grief, it is easy to distinguish several groups and grades. There is the rank and file of mourners, comprising all the people belonging to the remaining three clans; for, when a notable dies, everyone in the village community puts on mourning, except the members of his own clan. A small group is busy about the body and the grave; this consists of the male children and brothers-in-law of the deceased. Nearest to the corpse and plunged most deeply in the mimicry of grief are seated a few women, among whom one, the widow, is conspicuous, supported by her daughters and sisters. In this group, and it may be in that of the sons also, an observer well acquainted with these natives would be able to distinguish an interesting interplay of feigned and merely histrionic grief with real and heartfelt sorrow.

3

FUNERAL CEREMONIES AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF MOURNING

With this sociological scheme before us, we can now follow the sequence of event and ritual which begins automatically with a man's death. When death is seen to be approaching, the wife and children, kinsmen and relatives-in-law crowd round the bed, filling the small hut to overflowing. The consummation of death is marked by a frantic outburst of wailing. The widow,

BODY, AFTER FIRST EXHUMATION

The picture, taken at sunset, needed long exposure, hence many of the figures are blurred. The corpse shows signs of decomposition, though ligatures of the legs can be clearly seen. Toyodala, the widower is holding the corpse.

[*Ch. VI*, 3]

WIDOW IN FULL MOURNING

The breast is covered with black b
(seeds of an unidentified plant);
wears a necklace of balls from
husband's hair, another of rope,
another of his calico, and, on to
all, the jaw-bone. Her head is
pletely shaved and her face blacke

[*Ch. VI,*

who generally stands at the head of the dying man, utters the first piercing shriek, to which immediately other women respond, till the village is filled with the strange harmonies of the melodious dirge. From this moment all the varied activities of the days, and even weeks, which follow will be carried on to the choral accompaniment of a long-drawn wail which never stops for one instant. At times it swells up in violent and discordant gusts; then ebbs again into soft, melodious strains, musically well expressing sorrow. To me, this powerful uneven stream of sound, flowing over the village and enveloping as it were all these human beings in a feeble, imbecile protest against death, became symbolic of all that was deeply human and real in the otherwise stiff, conventional, incomprehensible ritual of mourning.

First the corpse is washed, anointed, and covered with ornaments (pls. 32 and 33), then the bodily apertures are filled with coconut husk fibre, the legs tied together, and the arms bound to the sides. Thus prepared, it is placed on the knees of a row of women who sit on the floor of the hut, with the widow or widower at one end holding the head.[1] They fondle the corpse, stroke the skin with caressing hands, press valuable objects against chest and abdomen, move the limbs slightly and agitate the head. The body is thus made to move and twist with slow and ghastly gestures to the rhythm of the incessant wailing. The hut is full of mourners, all intoning the melodious lamentation. Tears flow from their eyes and

[1] Cf. pl. lxv in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, where this act is reconstructed outside the hut for purposes of photography and the widow is replaced by the son.

mucus from their noses, and all the liquids of grief are carefully displayed and smeared over their bodies or otherwise conspicuously disposed. Outside, certain women, usually relatives-in-law of the dead man, perform a slow rhythmic dance (the *vaysali*) with relics in their hands (pl. 11).

The sons in the meantime dig the grave, which in olden days was always on the central place of the village, but which now, by the white man's decree, must be on the outskirts. A few hours after death the body is laid in it, wrapped in mats, and is covered with logs, which leave a shallow space above. On this layer of logs the widow lies down to keep vigil over the corpse. Her daughter may be beside her; round the brink of the grave are her sisters, kinswomen and friends, and the other relatives-in-law of the dead man. As night draws on, the central place fills with people; for even nowadays the white man's regulations against burial in the *baku* are circumvented by making a temporary grave there, or placing the corpse on the ground. Here the mourners, the kinsmen, all the villagers and many guests from far afield congregate to hold a most remarkable wake (*yawali*).

The chief mourners and kinsmen in appropriate groups keep the central position round the grave. Outside this inner ring, the villagers and guests are seated, each community in a separate body, their mood and behaviour becoming less tragic as they are farther removed from the corpse, until on the outskirts of the crowd, we find people in animated conversation, eating and chewing betel nut. The central group of mourners intones the deep wail of

sorrow, the others sing songs, and, as the night goes on, people will stand up and recite fragments of magic in honour of the departed, chanting them over the heads of the crowd.

The body is not allowed to remain long in peace—if the weird, noisy, and discordant din of singing, wailing, and haranguing can be so described. On the following evening, the body is exhumed, and inspected for signs of sorcery (see pl. 33). Such an inspection yields most important clues, as to who caused the death by witchcraft and for what motive this was done. I have assisted at this ceremony several times; the photograph for plate 33 was taken during the first exhumation of Ineykoya, wife of Toyodala, my best informant in Oburaku.[1]

Before daybreak after the first exhumation, the body is taken out of the grave, and some of the bones are removed from it. This anatomical operation is done by the man's sons, who keep some of the bones as relics and distribute the others to certain of their relatives. This practice has been strictly forbidden by the Government—another instance of the sacrifice of most sacred religious custom to the prejudice and moral susceptibilities of the "civilized" white. Yet the Trobrianders are so deeply attached to this custom that it is still clandestinely performed, and I have seen the jaw-bone of a man with whom I had spoken a few days before dangling from the neck of his widow (see pls. 34, 35, and 36).

The excision of the bones and their subsequent use as

[1] For further information about the signs of sorcery, see *Crime and Custom*, pp. 87-91.

relics is an act of piety; the process of detaching them from the putrefying corpse, a heavy, repugnant, and disgusting duty. The sons of the deceased are expected by custom to curb and conceal their disgust, and to suck some of the decaying matter when they are cleaning the bones. Speaking with virtuous pride they will say: "I have sucked the radius bone of my father; I had to go away and vomit; I came back and went on." After they have cleansed the bones, which is always done on the seashore, they return to the village, and the dead man's kinswomen ceremonially "wash their mouths" by giving them food and purify their hands with coconut oil. The bones are converted to various purposes, serviceable and ornamental: the skull is made into a lime pot to be used by the widow; the jaw-bone is turned into a neck ornament to hang on her breast; the radius, ulna, tibia, and some other bones are carved into lime spatulæ to be used with betel and areca nut.

A curious mixed sentiment underlies this complex of customs. On the one hand, it should be the wish of the widow and children to keep a part of the beloved dead. "The relic (*kayvaluba*) brings the departed back to our mind and makes our inside tender." On the other hand, the use of these relics is regarded as a harsh and unpleasant duty, as a sort of pious repayment for all the benefits received from the father. As it was explained to me: "Our mind is grieved for the man who has fed us, who has given us dainties to eat; we suck his bones as lime spatulæ." Or again: "It is right that a child should suck the father's ulna. For the father has held

out his hand to its excrement and allowed it to make water on to his knee" (compare similar locutions quoted in section 3 of chapter i). Thus the use of relics is at the same time a relief to the bereaved widow and children, and an act of filial piety which must be rigorously observed.

To the dead man's maternal kinsmen (*veyola*) the use of his bones is strictly tabooed. If they broke this taboo they would fall ill, their bellies would swell and they might die. The contact is most dangerous when the bone is still wet with the dead man's bodily juices. When, after a few years, the bones are handed over to the kinsmen, they are presented carefully wrapped in dry leaves, and are then only gingerly handled by them. They are finally deposited on rocky shelves overlooking the sea. Thus the bones pass several times from hand to hand before they come to their final rest.

More distant relatives-in-law and friends of the dead man have his nails, teeth and hair, which they make into all sorts of mourning ornaments and wear as relics. The dead man's personal possessions are used in the same way, and nowadays, when the bodily relics have frequently to be concealed, this practice is very much in favour (see frontispiece).

After the second exhumation the body is buried, the wake is over, and the people disperse; but the widow, who, during all this time, has not stirred from her husband's side, nor eaten nor drunk nor stopped in her wailing, is not yet released. Instead she moves into a small cage, built within her house, where she will remain for

months together, observing the strictest taboos. She must not leave the place; she may only speak in whispers; she must not touch food or drink with her own hands, but wait till they are put into her mouth; she remains closed up in the dark, without fresh air or light; her body is thickly smeared over with soot and grease, which will not be washed off for a long time. She satisfies all the necessities of life indoors, and the excreta have to be carried out by her relatives. Thus she lives for months shut up in a low-roofed, stuffy, pitch-dark space, so small that with outstretched hands she can almost touch the walls on either side; it is often filled with people who assist or comfort her, and pervaded by an indescribable atmosphere of human exhalations, accumulated bodily filth, stale food, and smoke. Also she is under the more or less active control and surveillance of her husband's matrilineal relatives, who regard her mourning and its inherent privations as their due. When the term of her widowhood has almost run its course—its length depends upon the status of her husband and varies from about six months to two years—she is gradually released by the dead man's kinsmen. Food is put into her mouth according to a ritual which gives her permission to eat with her own hands. Then, ceremonially, she is allowed to speak; finally she is released from the taboo of confinement and, still with appropriate ritual, requested to walk forth. At the ceremony of her complete release by the female *veyola* of the dead man, the widow is washed and anointed, and dressed in a new gaudy grass skirt in three colours. This makes her marriageable again.

4

THE IDEOLOGY OF MOURNING

Throughout the rigorous ritual of mourning, in which the widow, the orphans, and to a much lesser degree the other relatives-in-law of the deceased are caught and held as in a vise, we can observe the working of certain ideas belonging to the tribal tradition of the Trobrianders. One especially, the taboo on maternal kinsmen, which forces them to keep aloof since it is both dangerous to approach the corpse and superfluous to show grief, is strikingly visible throughout the whole course of burial, exhumation, and grave-tending. The corresponding idea, that it is the imperative duty of the widow and her relatives to show grief and perform all the mortuary services, emphasizes the strength and the permanence of marriage bonds as viewed by tradition. It is also a posthumous continuation of the remarkable system of services which have to be given to a married man by his wife's family, including the woman herself and her children.

In the mortuary phase of these services, however, the dead man's sub-clan have to render payment more strictly and more frequently than he had to do in his life-time. Immediately after the bones have been cut out and the remains buried, the dead man's sub-clan organize the first big distribution of food and valuables, in which the widow, children, and other relatives-in-law, as well as the unrelated mourners, are richly paid for the various services rendered in tending the corpse and digging the grave.

Other distributions follow at stated intervals. There i one expressly for women mourners; one for the tender of the grave; one for the rank and file of mourners; one by far the largest, in which presents of valuables and enormous quantities of food are given to the widow and children, in so far as they, in grief and piety, have used the bones of the dead man for their lime-chewing or as ornaments. This intricate series of distributions stretches out into years, and it entails a veritable tangle of obligations and duties; for the members of the deceased's sub-clan must provide food and give it to the chief organizer, the headman of the sub-clan, who collects it and then distributes it to the proper beneficiaries. These, in their turn, partially at least, re-distribute it. And each gift in this enormous complex trails its own wake of counter-gifts and obligations to be fulfilled at a future date.

The ostentation with which the widow and children have to display their grief, the thickness—literally and metaphorically speaking—with which they put on their mourning are indeed striking; and the underlying complex psychology of these things must have become apparent in the above account. In the first place, it is a duty towards the dead and towards his sub-clan, a duty strongly enjoined by the code of morals and guarded by public opinion, as well as by the kinsmen. "Our tears—they are for the kinsmen of our father to see," as one of the mourners simply and directly told me. In the second place, it demonstrates to the world at large that the wife and children were really good to the dead and that they took great care of him in his illness. Lastly, and this is

WIDOW IN HALF MOURNING

The same woman as in the previous picture, now wearing only one necklace and the jaw-bone; the hair is partly grown, she is no longer blackened and there is a sprig of aromatic herbs in her right armlet. (She was married a few months later.)

[*Ch. VI*, 3]

A Decorated Jaw-bone

It is the same as shown on plates 34 *and* 35.

[*Ch. VI*, 3]

very important, it allays any suspicion of their complicity in his murder by black magic. To understand the last queer motive, one has to realize the extreme fear, the ever-vigilant suspicion of sorcery, and the unusual lack of trust in anyone at all with reference to it. The Trobrianders, in common with all races at their culture level, regard every death without exception as an act of sorcery, unless it is caused by suicide or by a visible accident, such as poisoning or a spear thrust. It is characteristic of their idea of the bonds of marriage and fatherhood—which they regard as artificial and untrustworthy under any strain—that the principal suspicion of sorcery attaches always to the wife and children. The real interest in a man's welfare, the real affection, the natural innocence of any attempt against him are, by the traditional system of ideas, attributed to his maternal kinsmen. His wife and children are mere strangers, and custom persists in ignoring any real identity of interest between them.[1]

How utterly this traditional view is generally at variance with the economic and psychological reality, has been shown, and illustrated by many facts in chapter i, sections 1 and 2. For, apart from the personal attachment which always exists between husband and wife, father and children, it is clear that a man's children lose more at his death than do his kinsmen, who, as his heirs, always gain materially, especially in the case of a man of wealth, rank, and importance. And, in reality, the actual

[1] Even this is a simplified account, one in which the ideal of native law and tradition is emphasized, as is always done by the natives themselves. The full account of native ideas about sorcery in relation to kinship and relationship by marriage will have to be postponed to a later publication.

feelings of the survivors run their natural course independently of the mimic and official display of grief. The existence of an individual reality of thought, sentiment and impulse, unfolding itself side by side with the conventional sentiment and idea contained in and imposed by a traditional pattern, is one of the most important subjects of social psychology—a subject on which we need more material from ethnological investigation, carried on with a good deal of detail and based upon personal knowledge of the savages observed.

In the Trobriands, the genuine sorrow of the widow and children is blurred, overlaid, and made almost unrecognizable by the histrionic display of grief. But their real feelings can be gauged by observing their behaviour at other times, especially under critical conditions. I have seen more than one case of a husband sitting night after night at his sick wife's bedside. I have seen his hopes surge and ebb, and unmistakable, even deep, despair set in as the apparent chances of survival waned. Differences are clearly distinguishable in the sorrow of widows and widowers, some merely conforming to custom, others genuinely grieving. To'uluwa, the chief, though a rather selfish and shallow character, could not speak about the death of Kadamwasila, his favourite wife, without visible and real emotion. Toyodala, the nicest man I knew in Oburaku (see pl. 33), was for weeks anxiously watching his wife's illness, and hoping for her recovery. When she died, he behaved at first like a madman, and then, during his mourning confinement, in which I often visited him, he wept so bitterly that his

eyesight suffered. There is no doubt at all that the kinsmen feel the personal loss much less. On the other hand, their conventional sentiment of bereavement and realization of the maiming of their group do not leave them unaffected. But here we enter upon a problem, that of feelings and ideas relating to the solidarity of the clan, which, if followed up, would take us too far away from our subject.

The study of marriage has led us away from the study of sex in the narrower sense of the word. We have had to consider questions of social organization, and the legal, economic, and religious setting of the relation between husband and wife, parents and children. This last subject, parenthood, will still occupy us in the next two chapters, before we pass to the detailed analysis of the sexual impulse in its cultural manifestations among our natives.

CHAPTER VII

PROCREATION AND PREGNANCY IN NATIVE BELIEF AND CUSTOM

THE dependence of social organization in a given society upon the ideas, beliefs, and sentiments current there is of primary importance to the anthropologist. Among savage races we often find unexpected and fantastic views about natural processes, and correspondingly extreme and one-sided developments of social organization as regards kinship, communal authority, and tribal constitution. In this chapter I shall give an account of the Trobrianders' idea of the human organism as it affects their beliefs about procreation and gestation, beliefs which are embodied in oral tradition, customs, and ceremonies, and which exercise a deep influence on the social facts of kinship and on the matrilineal constitution of the tribe.

I

THE MALE AND FEMALE ORGANISM AND THE SEXUAL IMPULSE IN NATIVE BELIEF

The natives have a practical acquaintance with the main features of the human anatomy, and an extensive vocabulary for the various parts of the human body and for the internal organs. They often cut up pigs and other animals, while the custom of *post mortem* dissec-

tion of corpses, and visits among their overseas cannibal neighbours supply them with an exact knowledge of the homologies of the human and animal organism. Their physiological theories, on the other hand, are remarkably defective; there are many notable gaps in their knowledge about the functions of the most important organs, side by side with some fantastic and strange ideas.

Their understanding of sexual anatomy is, on the whole, limited in comparison with what they know about other parts of the human body. Considering the great interest which they take in this matter, the distinctions which they make are superficial and rough, and their terminology meagre. They distinguish and name the following parts: vagina (*wila*), clitoris (*kasesa*), penis (*kwila*), testes (*puwala*). They have no words to describe the *mons veneris* as a whole, nor the *labia majora* and *minora*. The *glans penis* they describe as the "point" of the penis (*matala kwila*) and the prepuce as the skin of the penis (*kanivinela kwila*). The internal female organs are called generically *bam*, and this comprises the uterus and the placenta. There is no special word for the ovaries.

Their physiological views are crude. The organs of sex serve for excretion and for pleasure. The excretive urinary processes are not associated with the kidneys. A narrow duct (*wotuna*) leads from the stomach directly to the bladder, from which it passes through the male and female genitals. Through this canal the water which we drink passes slowly till it is expelled, and on its way it becomes discoloured and sullied in the stomach by contact

with excrement. For food begins to be changed into excrement in the stomach.

Their ideas about the sexual functions of the genitals are more complex and systematic, and present a sort of psycho-physiological theory. The eyes are the seat of desire and lust (*magila kayta*, literally "desire of copulation"). They are the basis or cause (*u'ula*) of sexual passion. From the eyes, desire is carried to the brain by means of the *wotuna* (literally, tendril or creeper; in the anatomical context, vein, nerve, duct, or sinew), and thence spreads all over the body to the belly, the arms, the legs, until it finally concentrates in the kidneys. The kidneys are considered the main or middle part or trunk (*tapwana*) of the system. From them, other ducts (*wotuna*) lead to the male organ. This is the tip or point (*matala*, literally eye) of the whole system. Thus, when the eyes see an object of desire they "wake up," communicate the impulse to the kidneys, which transmit it to the penis and cause an erection. Hence the eyes are the primary motive of all sexual excitement: they are "the things of copulation"; they are "that which makes us desire to copulate." In proof of this the natives say: "A man with his eyes closed will have no erection"; though they qualify this statement by admitting that the olfactory sense can sometimes replace the eyes, for "when a woman discards her grass petticoat in the dark, desire may be aroused."

The process of sexual excitement in the female is analogous. Thus the eyes, the kidneys and the sexual organs are united by the same system of *wotuna* (com-

municating ducts). The eyes give the alarm, which passes through the body, takes possession of the kidneys, and produces sexual excitation of the clitoris. Both the male and female discharge are called by the same name (*momona* or *momola*), and they ascribe to both the same origin in the kidneys, and the same function, which has nothing to do with generation, but is concerned with lubricating the membrane and increasing pleasure.

I first obtained this account of the subject from Namwana Guya'u and Piribomatu, the former an amateur and the latter a professional sorcerer; both were intelligent men and both, in virtue of their profession, were interested in human anatomy and physiology. Thus it represents the highest development of Trobriand knowledge and theory. I obtained similar statements in other parts of the island, and in their main outline—such as the sexual functions of the kidneys, the great importance of the eyes and the olfactory sense, and the strict parallel between male and female sexuality—all were in agreement.

And on the whole, it is a fairly consistent, and not altogether nonsensical view of the psycho-physiology of sexual libido. The drawing of a parallel between the two sexes is consistent. The indication of the three cardinal points of the sexual system is sound, and characteristic of native canons of classification. In many subjects they distinguish these three elements: the *u'ula*, the *tapwana*, and the *matala*. The image is derived from a tree or a pillar or a spear: *u'ula*—in its literal sense the foot of the tree, the base, the foundation—has come, by ex-

tension, to mean cause, origin, source of strength; *tapwana*, the middle part of the trunk, also means the trunk itself, the main body of any elongated object, the length of a road; *matala*—originally eye, or point (as in a spear), and sometimes replaced by the word *dogina* or *dabwana*, the tip of a tree or the top of any high object—stands for the highest part, or, in more abstract metaphor, the final word, the highest expression.

The comparison as generally applied to the sexual mechanism is not, as we have said, altogether devoid of meaning, and only becomes nonsensical in ascribing a special function to the kidneys. These are regarded as a highly important and vital part of the human organism, and mainly because they are the source of the seminal fluid. Another view attributes male and female discharge, not to the kidneys, but to the bowels. In either case, the natives consider that something in the bowels is the actual agent of ejaculation: *ipipisi momona*—"it squirts out the discharge."

Very remarkable is their entire ignorance of the physiological function of the testes. They are not aware that anything is produced in this organ, and leading questions as to whether the male fluid (*momona*) has not its source there are answered emphatically in the negative. "See, women have no testes and yet they produce *momona*." This part of the male body is said to be only an ornamental appendage (*katububula*). "Indeed, how ugly would a penis look without the testes," a native æsthete will exclaim. The testes serve "to make it look proper" (*bwoyna*).

Love or affection (*yobwayli*) has its seat in the intestines, in the skin of the belly, and of the arms, and only to a lesser extent in those springs of desire, the eyes. Hence, we like to look at those of whom we are fond, such as our children, our friends, or our parents, but when this love is strong we want to hug them.

Menstruation the Trobrianders regard as a phenomenon connected with pregnancy in a vague manner: "the flow comes, it trickles, it trickles, it ebbs—it is over." They denote it simply by the word blood, *buyavi*, but with a characteristic grammatical peculiarity. While ordinary bodily blood is always mentioned with the pronoun of nearest possession, which is affixed to all the parts of a human body, menstruous blood is spoken of with the same possessive pronouns as are used for ornamentation and articles of apparel (second nearest possession). Thus *buyavigu*, "blood-mine" ("part of me—blood"), means bodily blood coming from a cut or hæmorrhage; *agu buyavi*, "my blood" ("belonging to me—blood"), means menstruous blood.

There is no pronounced masculine dislike or dread of menstruous blood. A man will not cohabit with his wife or sweetheart during her monthly period, but he will remain in the same hut and participate in the same food, and only refrains from sleeping in the same bed. Women, during menstruation, wash themselves daily, for purposes of cleanliness, in the same large water hole from which the whole village draws its drinking water, and in which, also, males occasionally take a bath. There are no special ablutions ceremonially carried out at the end of the pe-

riod, nor is any rite performed when a girl menstruates for the first time. The women have no special way of dressing during menstruation, except that at times they wear a longer skirt, and there is no particular modesty on the subject between the sexes.

2

REINCARNATION AND THE WAY TO LIFE THROUGH THE SPIRIT WORLD

The relation between menstruous blood and the formation of the fœtus has been observed and recognized by the natives, but their ideas about it are extremely vague. Such as they are, they are so mixed up with beliefs about the incarnation of spiritual beings, that physiological process and spiritual agencies will have to be considered together in this account. Thus we shall preserve the natural sequence and perspective of native doctrine. Since the new life, in Trobriand tradition, begins with death, we shall now have to move to the bedside of a dying man, and follow the progress of his spirit till we trace him back to earthly existence again.[1]

The spirit after death moves to Tuma, the Island of the Dead, where he leads a pleasant existence analogous to the terrestrial life—only much happier. Into

[1] In my article "Baloma, the Spirits of the Dead" already quoted, I have given a short preliminary account of native beliefs concerning procreation. I also expressed certain opinions about primitive ignorance of paternity in general, some of which were challenged by Professor Westermarck (*History of Human Marriage*, 5th edition, vol. i, pp. 290 sq.) and by Professor Carveth Read (article, "No Paternity" in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1917). The fuller evidence adduced in this chapter answers certain questions of fact raised by my critics.

the nature of this bliss we shall have to inquire in somewhat more detail, for sex plays an important part in it.[1] Here we are concerned with one of its features only: perpetual youth, preserved by the power of rejuvenation. Whenever the spirit (*baloma*) sees that bodily hair is covering his skin, that the skin itself is getting loose and wrinkled, and that his head is turning grey, he simply sloughs his covering and appears fresh and young, with black locks and smooth hairless skin.

But when a spirit becomes tired of constant rejuvenation, when he has led a long existence "underneath" as the natives call it, he may want to return to earth again; and then he leaps back in age and becomes a small pre-born infant. Some of my informants pointed out that in Tuma, as on earth, there are plenty of sorcerers. Black magic is frequently practised, and can reach a spirit and make him weak, sick and tired of life; then, and then only, will he go back to the beginnings of his existence and change into a spirit-child. To kill a spirit by black magic or accident is quite impossible; his end will always mean merely a new beginning.

These rejuvenated spirits, these little pre-incarnated babies or spirit-children, are the only source from which humanity draws its new supplies of life. A pre-born infant finds its way back to the Trobriands and into the womb of some woman, but always of a woman who belongs to the same clan and sub-clan as the spirit child itself. Exactly how it travels from Tuma to Boyowa, how it enters the body of its mother, and how there the

[1] Cf. below, ch. xii, last section.

physiological processes of gestation combine with the spirit activity, are questions on which native belief is not altogether consistent. But that all spirits have ultimately to end their life in Tuma and turn into unborn infants; that every child born in this world has first come into existence (*ibubuli*) in Tuma through the metamorphosis of a spirit; that the only reason and real cause of every birth is spirit activity, are facts known to everybody and firmly believed by all.

Owing to its importance, I collected details and variants of this system of beliefs with special care. The rejuvenation process is associated in a general way with sea water. In the myth which describes how humanity lost the privilege of regaining youth at will, the scene of the last rejuvenation is laid on the seashore in one of the lagoon inlets.[1] In the first account of rejuvenation which I obtained in Omarakana, I was told that the spirit "goes to the beach and bathes in the salt water." Tomwaya Lakwabulo the Seer (pl. 37), who in his trances often goes to Tuma and has frequent intercourse with the spirits, told me: "The *baloma* go to a spring called *sopiwina* (literally 'washing water'); it lies on the beach. There they wash their skin with brackish water. They become *to'ulatile* (young men)." Likewise in the final rejuvenation, which makes them return to the infant state, the spirits have to bathe in salt water, and, when they become babies again, they go into the sea and drift. They are always spoken

[1] This story is given in *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, pp. 80–106. The village of Bwadela, where the loss of immortality occurred, is on the west shore of the southern half of the main island.

of as floating on drift-logs, or on the leaves, boughs, dead seaweed, sea-scum, and the other light substances which litter the surface of the sea. Tomwaya Lakwabulo says that they float all the time around the shores of Tuma, wailing *wa, wa, wa.* "At night I hear their wailing. I ask, 'What is it?' 'Oh, children; the tide brings them, they come.'" The spirits in Tuma can see these pre-incarnated infants, and so can Tomwaya Lakwabulo when he descends into the spirit world. But to ordinary people they are invisible. At times, however, fishermen from the northern villages of Kaybola and Lu'ebila, when they go far out into the sea after shark, will hear the wailing —*wa, wa, wa*—in the sighing of the wind and the waves. Tomwaya Lakwabulo and other informants maintain that such spirit children never float far away from Tuma. They are transported to the Trobriands by the help of another spirit. Tomwaya Lakwabulo gives the following account. "A child floats on a drift log. A spirit sees it is good-looking. She takes it. She is the spirit of the mother or of the father of the pregnant woman (*nasu-suma*). Then she puts it on the head, in the hair, of the pregnant woman, who suffers headache, vomits, and has an ache in the belly. Then the child comes down into the belly, and she is really pregnant. She says: 'Already it (the child) has found me; already they (the spirits) have brought me the child.'" In this account we find two leading ideas: the active intervention of another spirit—the one who somehow conveys the child back to the Trobriands and gives it to the mother—and the insertion of

it through the head, with which (not in the statement quoted, but usually) is associated the idea of an effusion of blood, first to the head and then into the abdomen.

As to how the transportation is actually accomplished opinions vary: there are natives who imagine that the older spirit carries the baby either in some sort of receptacle—a plaited coconut basket or a wooden dish—or else simply in her arms. Others say candidly that they do not know. But the active control of another spirit is essentially important. When natives say that the children are "given by a *baloma*," that "a *baloma* is the real cause of childbirth," they refer always to this controlling spirit (as we might call it), and not to the spirit baby itself. This controlling spirit usually appears in a dream to the woman about to be pregnant (see ch. viii, sec. 1). As Motago'i, one of my best informants, volunteered: "She dreams her mother comes to her, she sees the face of her mother in a dream. She wakes up, and says: 'Oh, there is a child for me.'"

Frequently a woman will tell her husband who it was that brought the baby to her. And the tradition of this spiritual godfather or godmother is preserved. Thus the present chief of Omarakana knows that it was Bugwabwaga, one of his predecessors in office, who gave him to his mother. My best friend, Tokulubakiki, was a gift to his mother from her *kadala*, mother's brother. Tokulubakiki's wife received her eldest daughter from her mother's spirit. Usually it is some maternal relative of the prospective mother who bestows the gift; but it may be her father, as in Tomwaya Lakwabulo's statement.

The physiological theory associated with this belief has already been touched on. The spirit-child is laid by the bringer on the woman's head. Blood from her body rushes there, and on this tide of blood the baby gradually descends until it settles in the womb. The blood helps to build the body of the child—it nourishes it. That is the reason why, when a woman becomes pregnant, her menstruous flow stops. A woman will see that her menstruation has stopped. She will wait one, two, three moons, and then she will know for certain that she is pregnant. A much less authoritative belief maintains that the baby is inserted *per vaginam.*

Another version of the story of reincarnation ascribes more initiative to the pre-incarnated infant. It is supposed to be able to float of its own will towards the Trobriands. There it remains, probably in company with others, drifting about the shores of the island, awaiting its chance to enter the body of a woman while she bathes. Certain observances kept by girls in coastal villages are evidence that the belief has vitality. The spirit children are imagined, as around Tuma, to be attached to drift logs, scum, leaves, and branches, or else to the small stones on the bottom of the sea. Whenever, through wind and tide, much débris accumulates near the shore, the girls will not enter the water for fear they might conceive. Again, in the villages on the northern coast, there is a custom of filling a wooden baler with water from the sea which is then left overnight in the hut of a woman who wishes to conceive, on the chance that a spirit-child might have been caught in the baler and transfer itself

during the night into the woman. But even in this case, the woman is said to be visited in her dream by the spirit of some deceased maternal relative, so that a controlling spirit is still essential to conception. It is important to note that the water must always be fetched by her brother or by her mother's brother; that is, by a maternal kinsman. To give an example: a man from the village of Kapwani, on the northern shore, was asked by his sister's daughter to procure her a child. He went several times to the beach. One evening he heard a sound like the wailing of children. He drew water from the sea into the baler and left it in his *kadala's* (niece's) hut over night. She conceived a child, a girl. This child, unfortunately, turned out to be an albino, but this mischance was not due to the method of conception.

The chief points in which this belief differs from the one first described are that the pre-incarnated spirit child is endowed with more spontaneity—it can float across the sea and enter the bathing woman without help—and that its entry is effected *per vaginam*, or else through the skin of the abdomen if conception takes place in the hut. I found this belief prevalent in the northern part of the island, and especially in its coastal villages.

The nature of the spirit-child, or pre-incarnated baby, is not very clearly defined in traditional folk-lore. In answer to a direct question, the majority of informants said that they did not know what it was or what it looked like. One or two, however, who, through their superior intelligence, had worked out their beliefs in greater detail and with more consistency, said that it was like the fœtus

in the womb which, they added, "looks like a mouse." Tomwaya Lakwabulo volunteered the statement that pre-incarnated infants look like very minute and fully developed children, and that they are sometimes very beautiful. He had to say something, of course, since, on his own showing, he had seen them frequently in Tuma. Even the nomenclature is not quite definite. Usually it is called *waywaya*, small child or fœtus, but sometimes the word *pwapwawa* is used, which, though almost synonymous with *waywaya*, refers perhaps rather to a child already born than to the fœtus or a pre-incarnated baby. Quite as often, however, it is spoken of simply as "child," *gwadi* (plural, *gugwadi*).

I was told, though I was not able to verify this completely, that there is a magic performed over a species of betel leaf (*kwega*) called *kaykatuvilena kwega*, to induce pregnancy. A woman in Yourawotu, a small village near Omarakana, knows this magic, but unfortunately I was unable to get into touch with her.[1]

Thus, as is always the case, this belief dissolves into various and only partially consistent elements when examined under the magnifying glass of detailed research made over an extended area. The divergencies are not wholly due to geographical differences; nor can they be assigned to special social layers, for some of the inconsistencies occurred in the account of one and the same

[1] A statement which I guardedly gave on the authority of a trader in my article for the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1916, p. 404, to the effect that there are "some stones in Sinaketa, to which a woman who wants to become enceinte may have recourse," I found quite baseless after careful inquiries on the spot.

man. Tomwaya Lakwabulo, for instance, insisted that the children cannot travel alone, but must be carried by a controlling spirit and placed in the woman; yet he informed me that their wailing could be heard on the north shore near Kaybola. Or, again, the man of Kiriwina, who told me how the spirit child might enter from a baler, also spoke of an older spirit "giving" that child. Such inconsistencies are probably the result of several mythological cycles of ideas, meeting, so to speak, and intersecting on the locus of this belief. One of these cycles contains the idea of rejuvenation; another that of fresh life floating on the sea towards the island; another that a new member of the family comes as a gift from some ancestral spirit.

It is important, however, that, in all principal points, the various versions and descriptions agree, overlap and fortify one another; and we are left with a composite picture which, though blurred in some of its details, presents a strong outline when viewed from a distance. Thus all spirits rejuvenate; all children are incarnated spirits; the identity of sub-clan is preserved throughout the cycle; the real cause of childbirth is the spirit initiative from Tuma.

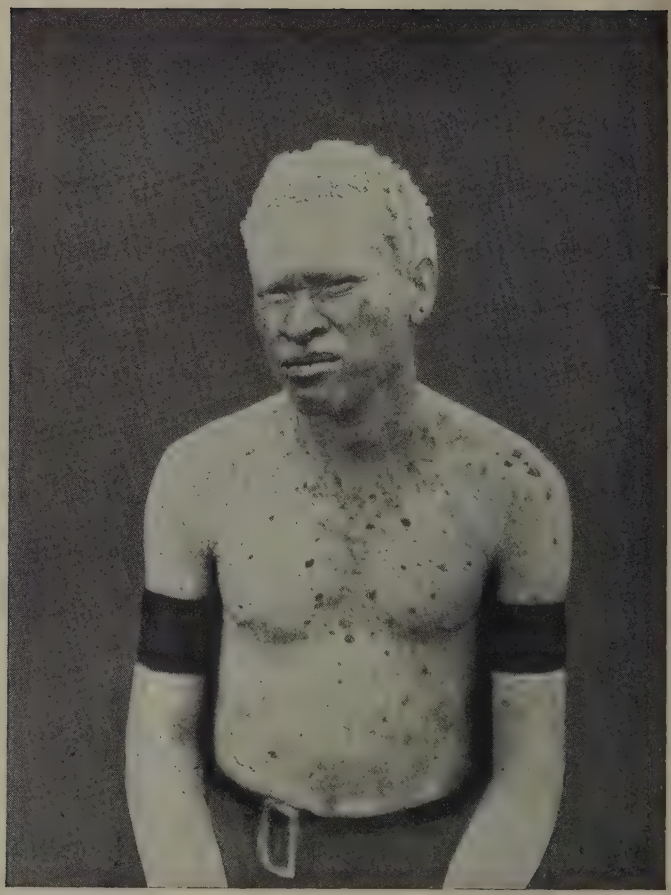
It must be remembered, however, that the belief in reincarnation is not one which exercises a great influence over custom and social organization in the Trobriands; rather it is one of those doctrines which lead a quiet and passive existence in folk-lore, and affect social behaviour only to a small extent. Thus, for instance, although the Trobrianders firmly believe that each spirit becomes a pre-

PLATE 37

TOMWAYA LAKWABULO THE SEER

Seated on the doorstep of his house, his widower's cap (made of basket work) covering his shaven head. He shows the characteristic expression which heralds the approach of a trance.

[*Ch. VII, 2; also ch. XII, 5*]



ALBINO

The difference in pigmentation
tween this and a normal Melane
can best be gauged by comparing
contrast between skin and brown a
let in this picture with the comp
fusion of the two tints on any o
man.

[*Ch. VII*, 3; *also ch. X*,

born infant, and that this again becomes reincarnated into a human being, yet no consciousness of personal identity is preserved through the process. That is, no one knows whose incarnation the infant is—who he was in his previous existence. There is no remembrance of past life in Tuma or on earth. Any questioning of the natives makes it obvious that the whole problem appears to them irrelevant and indeed uninteresting. The only recognized rule which guides these metamorphoses is that the continuity of clan and sub-clan is preserved throughout. There are no moral ideas of recompense or punishment embodied in their reincarnation theory, no customs or ceremonies associated with it or bearing witness to it.

3

IGNORANCE OF PHYSIOLOGICAL PATERNITY

The correlation of the mystical with the physiological aspects in pregnancy belief—of the origin of the child in Tuma and its journey to the Trobriands with the subsequent processes in the maternal body, the welling up of the blood from the abdomen to the head and down again from the head to the womb—provides a co-ordinated and self-contained, though not always consistent, theory of the origin of human life. It also gives a good theoretical foundation for matriliny; for the whole process of introducing new life into a community lies between the spirit world and the female organism. There is no room for any sort of physical paternity.

But there is another condition considered by the natives

indispensable for conception and child-birth, which complicates their theory and blurs the clear outline of their belief. This condition is related to sexual intercourse, and brings us face to face with the difficult and delicate question: are the natives really entirely ignorant of physiological fatherhood? Is it not rather a fact of which they are more or less aware, though it may be overlaid and distorted by mythological and animistic beliefs? Is it not an instance of empirical knowledge possessed by a backward community, but never formulated because it is too obvious to need explicit statement, whereas the traditional legend which is the basis of their social structure is carefully expressed as a part of the body of authoritative dogma? The facts which I am about to adduce contain an unambiguous and decisive answer to these questions. I shall not anticipate the conclusion, which, indeed, as we shall see, will be drawn by the natives themselves.

A virgin cannot conceive.

Tradition, diffuse folk-lore, certain aspects of custom and customary behaviour, teach the natives this simple physiological truth. They have no doubt about it, and it will be seen from what follows that they can formulate it tersely and clearly.

This statement was volunteered by Niyova, a sound informant in Oburaku: "A virgin does not conceive, because there is no way for the children to go, for that woman to conceive. When the orifice is wide open, the spirits are aware, they give the child." This is quite clear; but during the same sitting, the same informant had previously given me a detailed description of how the

spirit lays the child on the woman's head. The words of Niyova, here quoted verbatim, imply an insertion *per vaginam*. Ibena, a clever old man of Kasana'i, gave me a similar explanation—in fact, it was he who first made it clear to me that virginity mechanically impedes spirit impregnation. His method of explanation was graphic. Holding out his closed fist, he asked: "Can anything enter?" Then, opening it, he continued: "Now, of course, it is easy. Thus it is that a *bulabola* (large orifice) conceives easily, and a *nakapatu* (small or closed entrance, a virgin) cannot do it."

I have quoted these two statements *in extenso*, as they are telling and characteristic; but they are not isolated. I received a great number of similar declarations, all expressing the view that the way must be open for the child, but this need not necessarily be brought about by sexual intercourse. The point is quite clear. The vagina must be opened to remove the physiological obstacle, called simply *kalapatu* (her tightness). Once this has been done, in the normal way by sexual intercourse, there is no need for male and female to come together in order to produce a child.

Considering that there are no virgins in the villages—for every female child begins her sexual life very early—we may wonder how the natives arrived at this *conditio sine qua non*. Again, since they have got so far, it may appear difficult to see why they have not advanced just a little further and grasped the fertilizing virtue of seminal fluid. Nevertheless, there are many facts to prove that they have not made this advance: as certainly

as they know the necessity of a mechanical opening of the vagina, so they do not know the generative power of the male discharge. It was in discussing the mythological tales of mankind's beginnings on earth (see below, ch. xiii, sec. 5) and fantastic legends of distant lands, to the account of which I shall now proceed, that I was made aware of this subtle yet all-important distinction between mechanical dilation and physiological fertilization; and was thus enabled to place native belief regarding procreation in its proper perspective.

According to native tradition, mankind originated from underground, whence a couple, a brother and a sister, emerged at different specified places. According to certain legends, only women appeared at first. Some of my commentators insisted upon this version: "You see, we are so many on the earth because many women came first. Had there been many men, we would be few." Now, whether accompanied by her brother or not, the primeval woman is always imagined to bear children without the intervention of a husband or of any other male partner; but not without the vagina being opened by some means. In some of the traditions this is mentioned explicitly. Thus on the island of Vakuta there is a myth which describes how an ancestress of one of the sub-clans exposed her body to falling rain, and thus mechanically lost her virginity. In the most important Trobriand myth, a woman, called Mitigis or Bolutukwa, mother of the legendary hero Tudava, lives quite alone in a grotto on the seashore. One day she falls asleep in her rocky dwelling, reclining under a dripping stalactite. The drops of water pierce

her vagina, and thus deprive her of virginity. Hence her second name, Bolutukwa: *bo*, female, prefix *litukwa*, dripping water. In other myths of origin the means of piercing the hymen are not mentioned, but it is often explicitly stated that the ancestress was without a man, and could, therefore, have no sexual intercourse. When asked in so many words how it was that they bore children without a man, the natives would mention, more or less coarsely or jestingly, some means of perforation which they could easily have used, and it was clear that no more was necessary.

Moving into another mythological dimension—into present-day legends of countries far to the north—we find the marvellous land of Kaytalugi, peopled exclusively by sexually rabid women.[1] They are so brutally profligate that their excesses kill every man thrown by chance upon their shores, and even their own male children never attain maturity before they are sexually done to death. Yet these women are very prolific, producing many children, male and female. If a native is asked how this can be, how these females become pregnant if there are no men, he simply cannot understand such an absurd question. These women, he will say, destroy their virginity in all sorts of ways if they cannot get hold of a man to torture to death. And they have got their own *baloma*, of course, to give them children.

I have adduced these mythical instances first, for they clearly demonstrate the native point of view; the need for perforation, and the absence of any idea concerning

[1] Cf. ch. xii, sec. 4.

the fertilizing value of the semen. But there are some convincing present-day instances which show that the natives believe that a girl can be with child without previous sexual intercourse. Thus, there are some women so ugly and repulsive that no one believes that they can ever have had intercourse (save, of course, for those few who know better, but who are very careful to keep silent from shame; see ch. x, sec. 2). There is Tilapo'i, now an old woman, who was famous for her hideousness in youth. She has become blind, was always almost an idiot, and had a repulsive face and deformed body. Her unattractiveness was so notorious that she became the subject of a saying: *Kwoy Tilapo'i* ("have connection with Tilapo'i"), a form of abuse used in mild chaff (ch. xiii, sec. 4). Altogether she is an infinite source and pivot of all kinds of matrimonial and obscene jokes, all based on the presumed impossibility of being Tilapo'i's lover or prospective husband. I was assured, over and over again, that no one ever could have had connection with her. Yet this woman has had a child, as the natives would triumphantly point out, when I tried to persuade them that only by intercourse can children be produced.

Again, there is the case of Kurayana, a woman of Sinaketa, whom I never saw, but who, I was told, was "so ugly that any man would be ashamed" to have intercourse with her. This saying implies that social shame would be an even stronger deterrent than sexual repulsion, an assumption which shows that my informant was not a bad practical psychologist. Kurayana, as thoroughly chaste as anyone could be—by necessity, if not by virtue—

had no less than six children, five of whom died and one of whom still survives.[1]

Albinos, male and female, are considered unfit for sexual intercourse. There is not the slightest doubt that all the natives feel real horror of and disgust for these unfortunate beings, a horror perfectly comprehensible after one has seen specimens of such unpigmented natives (see pl. 38). Yet there are on record several instances of albino women who have brought forth a numerous progeny. "Why did they become pregnant? Is it because they copulate at night time? or because a *baloma* has given them children?" Such was the clinching argument of one of my informants, for the first alternative appeared obviously absurd. Indeed, the whole of this line of argument was volunteered to me in one of my early discussions of the subject, although I obtained confirmatory data by subsequent research. For as a means of testing the firmness of their belief, I sometimes made myself definitely and aggressively an advocate of the truer physiological doctrine of procreation. In such arguments the natives would quote, not only positive instances, such as those just mentioned, of women who have children without having enjoyed any intercourse; but would also refer to the equally convincing negative aspect, that is, to the many cases in which an unmarried woman has plenty of intercourse and no children. This argument would be repeated over and over again, with specially telling con-

[1] In the already quoted article in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1916, I did an injustice to Kurayana in stating on p. 412 that she was the mother of five children only. Six is the correct number, all produced without the assistance of a man.

crete examples of childless persons renowned for profligacy, or of women who lived with one white trader after another without having any baby.

4

WORDS AND DEEDS IN TESTIMONY

Although I was never afraid of using a leading question, or of eliciting the natives' point of view by contradicting it, I was somewhat astonished at the fierce opposition evoked by my advocacy of physiological paternity. Only late in my Trobriand career did I find out that I was not the first to attack this part of native belief, having been preceded by the missionary teachers. I speak mainly of the coloured ones; for I do not know what attitude was taken by the one or two white men who were in charge of the mission before my time, and those who came to the islands while I was there only held office for a short period and did not go into such details. But all my native informants corroborated the fact, once I had discovered it, that the doctrine and ideal of Paternity, and all that tends to strengthen it, is advocated by the coloured Christian teachers.

We must realize that the cardinal dogma of God the Father and God the Son, the sacrifice of the only Son and the filial love of man to his Maker would completely miss fire in a matrilineal society, where the relation between father and son is decreed by tribal law to be that of two strangers, where all personal unity between them is denied, and where all family obligations are associated

with mother-line. We cannot then wonder that Paternity must be among the principal truths to be inculcated by proselytizing Christians. Otherwise the dogma of the Trinity would have to be translated into matrilineal terms, and we should have to speak of a God-*kadala* (mother's brother), a God-sister's-son, and a divine *baloma* (spirit).

But apart from any doctrinal difficulty, the missionaries are earnestly engaged in propagating sexual morality as we conceive it, in which endeavour the idea of the sexual act as having serious consequences to family life is indispensable. The whole Christian morality, moreover, is strongly associated with the institution of a patrilineal and patriarchal family, with the father as progenitor and master of the household. In short, a religion whose dogmatic essence is based on the sacredness of the father to son relationship, and whose morals stand or fall by a strong patriarchal family, must obviously proceed by confirming the paternal relation, by showing that it has a natural foundation. Only during my third expedition to New Guinea did I discover that the natives had been somewhat exasperated by having an "absurdity" preached at them, and by finding me, so "unmissionary" as a rule, engaged in the same futile argument.

When I found this out, I used to call the correct physiological view "the talk of the missionaries," and goad the natives into comment or contradiction. In this manner I obtained some of my strongest and clearest statements, from which I shall select a few.

Motago'i, one of my most intelligent informants, in

answer to a somewhat arrogantly framed affirmation that the missionaries were right, exclaimed:—

"Gala wala!	*Isasopasi:*	*yambwata*	*yambwata*
Not at all!	They lie:	always	always
nakubukwabuya	*momona*		*ikasewo*
unmarried girls	seminal fluid		it is brimful
litusi	*gala."*		
children theirs not.			

Which may be freely rendered: "Not at all, the missionaries are mistaken; unmarried girls continually have intercourse, in fact they overflow with seminal fluid, and yet have no children."

Here, in terse and picturesque language, Motago'i expresses the view that, after all, if sexual intercourse were causally connected with child production, it is the unmarried girls who should have children, since they lead a much more intensive sexual life than the married ones—a puzzling difficulty which really exists, as we shall see later on, but which our informant exaggerates slightly, since unmarried girls do conceive, though not nearly as frequently as anyone holding the "missionary views" would be led to expect. Asked in the course of the same discussion: "What, then, is the cause of pregnancy?" he answered: "Blood on the head makes child. The seminal fluid does not make the child. Spirits bring at night time the infant, put on women's heads—it makes blood. Then, after two or three months, when the blood [that is, menstruous blood] does not come out, they know: 'Oh, I am pregnant!'"

An informant in Teyava, in a similar discussion, made several statements of which I adduce the two most spontaneous and conclusive ones. "Copulation alone cannot produce a child. Night after night, for years, girls copulate. No child comes." In this we see again the same argument from empirical evidence; the majority of girls, in spite of their assiduous cultivation of intercourse, do not bring forth. In another statement the same informant says: "They talk that seminal fluid makes child. Lie! The spirits indeed bring [children] at night time."

My favourite informant in Omarakana, Tokulubakiki, on whose honesty, goodwill, and dispassionate reflection I could always rely, when I wanted a final test of my information, gave a clear, though somewhat Rabelaisian, statement of the native point of view:—

"Takayta,	*itokay*	*vivila*	*italagila*
We copulate	she gets up	woman	it runs out
momona—	*iwokwo."*		
seminal fluid—	it is finished.		

In other words, after the traces of sexual intercourse have been removed, there are no further consequences.

These sayings are trenchant enough, as were those previously quoted; but, after all, an opinion is a mere academic expression of belief, the depth and tenacity of which can best be gauged by the test of behaviour. To a South Sea native, as to a European peasant, his domestic animals—that is, his pigs—are the most valued and cherished members of the household. And if his earnest and genuine conviction can be seen anywhere, it will be in his

care for the welfare and quality of his animals. The South Sea natives are extremely keen to have good, strong, and healthy pigs, and pigs of a good breed.

The main distinction which they make in the matter of quality is that between the wild or bush-pigs, and the tame village pigs. The village pig is considered a great delicacy, while the flesh of the bush-pig is one of the strongest taboos to people of rank in Kiriwina, the transgression of which they hold in genuine horror and disgust. Yet they allow the female domestic pigs to wander on the outskirts of the village and in the bush, where they can pair freely with male bush-pigs. On the other hand, they castrate all the male pigs in the village in order to improve their condition. Thus, naturally, all the progeny are in reality descended from wild bush sires. Yet the natives have not the slightest inkling of this fact. When I said to one of the chiefs, "You eat the child of a bush-pig," he simply took it as a bad joke; for making fun of bush-pig eating is not considered altogether good taste by a Trobriander of birth and standing. But he did not understand at all what I really meant.

On one occasion when I asked directly how pigs breed, the answer was: "The female pig breeds by itself," which simply meant that, probably, there is no *baloma* involved in the multiplication of domestic animals. When I drew parallels and suggested that small pigs are brought by their own *balomas*, they were not convinced; and it was evident that neither their own interest, nor the data supplied by tradition, went far enough to inspire any concern as to the procreation of pigs.

Very important was a statement volunteered to me by Motago'i: "From all male pigs we cut off the testes. They copulate not. Yet the females bring forth." Thus he ignored the possible misconduct of the bush-pigs, and adduced the castration of domestic hogs as final proof that intercourse has nothing to do with breeding. On another occasion, I instanced the only two goats in the Archipelago, one male and one female, which a trader had recently imported. When I asked whether the female would bear any young if the male were killed, there was no uncertainty about the answer: "Year after year she will breed." Thus they have the firm conviction that if a female animal were entirely cut off from any male of the species, this would by no means interfere with her fecundity.

Another crucial test is provided by the recent importation of European pigs. In honour of the first man who brought them, the late Mick George, a Greek trader and a truly Homeric character, they are called by the natives *bulukwa Miki* (Mick's pigs), and they will give five to ten of the native pigs in exchange for one of them. Yet when they have acquired it, they will not take the slightest precautions to make it breed with a male of the same superior race, though they could easily do so. In one instance when, having several small pigs of European race they castrated all the males, they were reproved by a white trader, and told that by so doing they lowered the whole breed. But they simply could not be made to understand, and all over the district they continue to allow their valued European pigs to mis-breed.

In the article already quoted (*Journal of the Anthropological Institute,* 1916) I gave verbatim a remark of one of my informants about pigs, obtained early in the course of my field-work. "They copulate, copulate, presently the female will give birth." My comment was: "Thus here copulation appears to be the *u'ula* (cause) of pregnancy." This opinion, even in its qualified form, is incorrect. As a matter of fact, during my first visit to the Trobriands, after which this article was written, I never entered deeply into the matter of animal procreation. The concise native utterance quoted above, cannot, in the light of subsequent fuller information, be interpreted as implying any knowledge of how pigs really breed. As it stands, it simply means that vaginal dilation is as necessary in animals as in human beings. It also implies that, according to native tradition, animals are not subject in this, as in many other respects, to the same causal relations as man. In man, spirits are the cause of pregnancy: in animals—it just happens. Again, while the Trobrianders ascribe all human ailments to sorcery, with animals disease is just disease. Men die because of very strong evil magic; animals—just die. But it would be quite incorrect to interpret this as evidence that the natives know, in the case of animals, the natural causes of impregnation, disease, and death; while in man they obliterate this knowledge by an animistic superstructure. The true summary of the native outlook is that they are so deeply interested in human affairs that they construct a special tradition about all that is vital for man; while

in what concerns animals, things are taken as they come, without any attempt at explanation, and also without any insight into the real course of nature.

Their attitude to their own children also bears witness to their ignorance of any causal relation between congress and the ensuing pregnancy. A man whose wife has conceived during his absence will cheerfully accept the fact and the child, and he will see no reason at all for suspecting her of adultery. One of my informants told me that after over a year's absence he returned to find a newly born child at home. He volunteered this statement as an illustration and final proof of the truth that sexual intercourse has nothing to do with conception. And it must be remembered that no native would ever discuss any subject in which the slightest suspicion of his wife's fidelity could be involved. In general, no allusion is ever made to her sexual life, past or present. Her pregnancy and childbirth are, on the other hand, freely discussed.

There is another instance of a native of the small island of Kitava, who, after two years' absence, was quite pleased to find a few months' old baby at home, and could not in the slightest degree understand the indiscreet taunts and allusions of some white men with reference to his wife's virtue. My friend Layseta, a great sailor and magician of Sinaketa, spent a long time in his later youth in the Amphlett Islands. On his return he found two children, borne by his wife during his absence. He is very fond of them and of his wife; and when I discussed the

matter with others, suggesting that one at least of these children could not be his, my interlocutors did not understand what I meant.

Thus we see, from these instances, that children born in wedlock during a prolonged absence of the husband, will yet be recognized by him as his own children, that is as standing to him in the social relation of child to father. An instructive parallel to this is supplied by cases of children born out of wedlock, but during a liaison as exclusive as a marriage. In such a case, the physiological father would be obvious to us; yet a Trobriander would not recognize the children as his, and further, since for a girl it is dishonourable to bear children before she is married, he might refuse to marry her. Of this I had a good example: Gomaya, one of my early informants, whom we know already (ch. iv, sec. 6), had a liaison with a girl called Ilamweria (pl. 39). They lived together and were going to be married, but she became pregnant and gave birth to a girl, whereupon Gomaya abandoned her. He was quite convinced that she had never had any relations with another boy, so, if any question of physiological fatherhood had come into his mind, he would have accepted the child as his own, and married the mother. But, in accordance with the native point of view, he simply did not inquire into the question of fatherhood; it was enough that there was prenuptial motherhood.

Thus of children borne by a married woman, her husband is the father *ex officio*, but for an unmarried mother, there is "no father to the child." The father is defined socially, and in order that there may be fatherhood there

AN UNMARRIED MOTHER

Ilanweria in the centre of a typical street between the row of storehouses (right), and dwellings (left). The large pots are prepared for communal cookery.

[*Ch. VII, 4; also ch. X, intro.*]

must be marriage. And traditional sentiment regards illegitimate children, as we have said, as improper on the part of the mother. Of course there is no implication of sexual guilt in this censure, but, to the native, to do wrong is simply to act contrary to custom. And it is not the custom for an unmarried girl to have babies, although it is the custom for her to have as much sexual intercourse as she likes. When asked why it is considered bad, they will answer:—

"Pela gala tamala, gala taytala bikopo'i"

"Because no father his, no man he [who] might take [it] in his arms."

"Because there is no father to the child, there is no man to take it in his arms." In this locution, the correct definition of the term *tamala* is clearly expressed: it is the mother's husband, the man whose rôle and duty it is to take the child in his arms and to help her in nursing and bringing it up.

5

FATHERLESS CHILDREN IN A MATRILINEAL SOCIETY

This seems a convenient place to speak about the very interesting problem of illegitimate children, or, as the natives word it, "children borne by unmarried girls," "fatherless children." Several questions must, no doubt, have already obtruded themselves on the reader. Since there is so much sexual freedom, must there not be a great number of children born out of wedlock? If this is not so, what means of prevention do the natives possess? If

it is so, how do they deal with the problem, what is the position of illegitimate children?

As to the first question, it is very remarkable to note that illegitimate children are rare. The girls seem to remain sterile throughout their period of licence, which begins when they are small children and continues until they marry; when they are married they conceive and breed, sometimes quite prolifically. I express myself cautiously about the number of illegitimate children, for in most cases there are special difficulties even in ascertaining the fact. To have prenuptial children is, as I have said, by an arbitrary ruling of doctrine and custom, considered reprehensible. Thus, out of delicacy towards people present, out of family interest or local pride, the existence of such children is invariably concealed. Such children are often adopted by some relative, and the elasticity of kinship terms makes it very difficult to distinguish between actual and adopted children. If a married man says, "This is my child," it may quite easily be his wife's sister's illegitimate baby. So that only an approximate estimate can be made even in a community with which one is very well acquainted. I was able to find roughly a dozen illegitimate children recorded genealogically in the Trobriands, or about one per cent. In this the illegitimate children of the ugly, deformed, or albino women mentioned above are not included, as none of them happens to figure in the genealogical records made by me.

Thus we are faced with the question: Why are there

so few illegitimate children? On this subject I can only speak tentatively, and I feel that my information is perhaps not quite as full as it might have been, had I concentrated more attention upon it. One thing I can say with complete confidence: no preventive means of any description are known, nor the slightest idea of them entertained. This, of course, is quite natural. Since the procreative power of seminal fluid is not known, since it is considered not only innocuous but beneficent, there is no reason why the natives should interfere with its free arrival in the parts which it is meant to lubricate. Indeed, any suggestion of neo-Malthusian appliances makes them shudder or laugh according to their mood or temperament. They never practice *coitus interruptus*, and still less have any notion about chemical or mechanical preventives.

But though I am quite certain on this point, I cannot speak with the same conviction about abortion, though probably it is not practised to any large extent. I may say at once that the natives, when discussing these matters, feel neither fear nor constraint, so there can be no question of any difficulties in finding out the state of affairs because of reticence or concealment. My informants told me that a magic exists to bring about premature birth, but I was not able either to obtain instances in which it was performed, or to find out the spells or rites made use of. Some of the herbs employed in this magic were mentioned to me, but I am certain that none of them possess any physiological properties. Abortion by mechanical means

seems, in fine, the only effective method practised to check the increase of population, and there is no doubt that even this is not used on a large scale.

So the problem remains. Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual life young, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely? This, of course, cannot be answered here, as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue. I am, as I have said, by no means confident of my researches being final in this matter.

It is amusing to find that the average white resident or visitor to the Trobriands is deeply interested in this subject, and in this subject only, of all the ethnological problems opened to him for consideration. There is a belief prevalent among the white citizens of eastern New Guinea that the Trobrianders are in possession of some mysterious and powerful means of prevention or abortion. This belief is, no doubt, explicable by the remarkable and puzzling facts which we have just been discussing. It is enhanced by insufficient knowledge, and the tendency towards exaggeration and sensationalism so characteristic of the crude European mind. Of insufficient knowledge, I had several examples; for every white man with whom I spoke on the subject would start with the dogmatic assertion that unmarried girls among the Trobrianders never have children, saving those who live with white traders; whereas, as we have seen, illegitimate children are on record. Equally incorrect and fantastic is the

belief in mysterious contraceptives, for which not even the oldest residents, who are firmly convinced of their existence, can supply any basis in fact. This seems to be an example of the well-known truth, that a higher race in contact with a lower one has a tendency to credit the members of the latter with mysterious demoniacal powers.

Returning now to the question of "fatherless children," we find among the Trobrianders a trend of public opinion with regard to illegitimacy which almost amounts to a moral rule. We, in our own society, share this opinion very emphatically; but with us it is connected with our strong moral condemnation of unchastity. In theory at least, if not in practice, we condemn the fruits of sexual immorality, because of the cause and not because of the consequence. Our syllogism runs thus: "All intercourse out of wedlock is bad; pregnancy is caused by intercourse; hence all unmarried pregnant girls are bad." Thus, when we find in another society the last term of the syllogism endorsed, we jump to the conclusion that the other terms also obtain, especially the middle one. That is, we assume that the natives are aware of physiological paternity. We know, however, that the first proposition is not accepted in the Trobriands, for intercourse out of wedlock is quite free from censure unless it offends the special taboos of adultery, exogamy, and incest. Therefore the middle term cannot serve as a connecting link, and the fact that the natives endorse the conclusion proves nothing about their knowledge of fatherhood. I have developed this point in some detail, because it is a characteristic example of how difficult is emancipation from our own

narrow modes of thinking and feeling, and our own rigid structures of social and moral prejudice. Although I myself should have been on my guard against such traps, and though at that time I was already acquainted with the Trobrianders and their ways of thinking, yet, on realizing their disapproval of children out of wedlock, I went through all this false reasoning before a fuller acquaintance with the facts forced me to correct it.

Fecundity in unmarried girls is discreditable; sterility in married women is unfortunate. The same term *nakarige* (*na,* female prefix, *karige,* to die) is used of a childless woman as of a barren sow. But this condition brings no shame on the person concerned, and does not detract from the social status of such a woman. The oldest wife of To'uluwa, Bokuyoba, has no children, yet she ranks first among the wives as is the due of her age. Nor is the word *nakarige* considered to be indelicate; a sterile woman will use it when speaking of herself, and others will apply it to her in her presence. But fertility in married women is considered a good thing. Primarily it affects her maternal kinsmen, and is a matter of great importance to them (see ch. i, sec. 1). "The kinsmen rejoice, for their bodies become stronger when one of their sisters or nieces has plenty of children." The wording of this statement expresses the interesting conception of collective clan unity, of the members being not only of the same flesh, but almost forming one body (see ch. vi and ch. xiii, sec. 5).

Returning again to the main trend of our argument, it must be noted that the scorn and disapproval levelled

at illegitimacy is highly significant sociologically. Let us realize once more this interesting and strange constellation of facts: physical fatherhood is unknown; yet fatherhood in a social sense is considered necessary and the "fatherless child" is regarded as something anomalous, contrary to the normal course of events, and hence reprehensible. What does this mean? Public opinion, based on tradition and custom, declares that a woman must not become a mother before she marries, though she may enjoy as much sexual liberty as she likes within lawful bounds. This means that a mother needs a defender and provider of economic necessities. She has one natural master and protector in her brother, but he is not in a position to look after her in all matters where she needs a guardian. According to native ideas, a woman who is pregnant must, at a certain stage, abstain from all intercourse and "turn her mind away from men." She then needs a man who will take over all sexual rights in regard to her, abstain from exercising even his own privileges from a certain moment, guard her from any interference, and control her own behaviour. All this the brother cannot do, for, owing to the strict brother-sister taboo, he must scrupulously avoid even the thought of anything which is concerned with his sister's sex. Again, there is the need for a man to keep guard over her during childbirth, and "to receive the child into his arms," as the natives put it. Later it is the duty of this man to share in all the tender cares bestowed on the child (see ch. i, secs. 1 and 3; and ch. xiii, sec. 6). Only when the child grows up does he relinquish the greater part of his

authority and hand it over to his wife's brother, retaining some of it in the case of female children, when it comes to marriage (see above, ch. iv).

Thus the part played by the husband is strictly defined by custom and is considered socially indispensable. A woman with a child and no husband is an incomplete and anomalous group. The disapproval of an illegitimate child and of its mother is a particular instance of the general disapproval of everything which does not conform to custom, and runs counter to the accepted social pattern and traditional tribal organization. The family, consisting of husband, wife, and children, is the standard set down by tribal law, which also defines the functions of its component parts. It is therefore not right that one of the members of this group should be missing.

Thus, though the natives are ignorant of any physiological need for a male in the constitution of the family, they regard him as indispensable socially. This is very important. Paternity, unknown in the full biological meaning so familiar to us, is yet maintained by a social dogma which declares: "Every family must have a father; a woman must marry before she may have children; there must be a male to every household."

The institution of the individual family is thus firmly established on a strong feeling of its necessity, quite compatible with an absolute ignorance of its biological foundations. The sociological rôle of the father is established and defined without any recognition of his physiological nature.

6

THE SINGULAR CLAIMS OF SOCIOLOGICAL PATERNITY

The interesting duality between matrilineal and patriarchal influences, represented by the mother's brother and the father respectively, is one of the leitmotifs of the first act of Trobriand tribal life. Here we have come to the very core of the problem: for we see within this social scheme, with its rigid brother-sister taboo and its ignorance of physical fatherhood, two natural spheres of influence to be exercised over a woman by a man (see ch. i, secs. 1 and 2): the one, that of sex, from which the brother is absolutely debarred and where the husband's influence is paramount; the other, that in which the natural interests of blood relationship can be safeguarded properly only by one who is of the same blood. This is the sphere of the woman's brother.

By the brother's inability to control or to approach, even as a distant spectator, the principal theme in a woman's life—her sex—a wide breach is left in the system of matriliny. Through this breach the husband enters into the closed circle of family and household, and once there makes himself thoroughly at home. To his children he becomes bound by the strongest ties of personal attachment, over his wife he assumes exclusive sexual rights, and shares with her the greater part of domestic and economic concerns.

On the apparently unpropitious soil of strict matriliny, with its denial of any paternal bond through procreation

and its declaration of the father's extraneousness to progeny, there spring up certain beliefs, ideas and customary rules, which smuggle extreme patrilineal principles into the stronghold of mother-right. One of these ideas is of the kind which figures so largely in sensational amateur records of savage life, and it strikes us at first as savage indeed, so lop-sided, distorted and quaint does it appear. I refer to their idea about the similarity between parents and offspring. That this is a favourite topic of nursery gossip in civilized communities needs no special comment. In a matrilineal society, such as the Trobriands, where all maternal relatives are considered to be of the "same body," and the father to be a "stranger," we should have no doubt in anticipating that facial and bodily similarity would be traced in the mother's family alone. The contrary is the case, however, and this is affirmed with extremely strong social emphasis. Not only is it a household dogma, so to speak, that a child never resembles its mother, or any of its brothers and sisters, or any of its maternal kinsmen, but it is extremely bad form and a great offence to hint at any such similarity. To resemble one's father, on the other hand, is the natural, right, and proper thing for a man or woman to do.

I was introduced to this rule of *savoir vivre* in the usual way, by making a *faux pas*. One of my bodyguard in Omarakana, named Moradeda, was endowed with a peculiar cast of features which had struck me at first sight and fascinated me, for it had a strange similarity to the Australian aboriginal type—wavy hair, broad face,

low forehead, extremely broad nose, with a much depressed bridge, wide mouth with protruding lips, and a prognathous chin. One day I was struck by the appearance of an exact counterpart to Moradeda, and asked his name and whereabouts. When I was told that he was my friend's elder brother, living in a distant village, I exclaimed: "Ah, truly! I asked about you because your face is alike—alike to that of Moradeda." There came such a hush over all the assembly that I was startled by it at once. The man turned round and left us; while part of the company present, after averting their faces in a manner half-embarrassed, half-offended, soon dispersed. I was then told by my confidential informants that I had committed a breach of custom; that I had perpetrated what is called *taputaki migila*, a technical expression referring only to this act which might be translated: "To-defile-by-comparing-to-a-kinsman-his-face" (see ch. xiii, sec. 4). What astonished me in this discussion was that, in spite of the striking resemblance between the two brothers, my informants refused to admit it. In fact, they treated the question as if no one could possibly ever resemble his brother, or, for the matter of that, any maternal kinsman. I made my informants quite angry and displeased with me by arguing the point, and even more so by quoting cases of such obvious similarity between two brothers as that which obtained between Namwana Guya'u and Yobukwa'u (pl. 40).

This incident taught me never to hint at such a resemblance in the presence of the people concerned. But I thrashed the matter out with many natives subsequently

in the course of general conversation. I found that everyone in the Trobriands will, in the teeth of all the evidence, stoutly deny that similarity can exist between matrilineal kinsmen. A Trobriander is simply irritated and insulted if striking instances are pointed out to him, in exactly the same way as, in our own society, we irritate our next-door neighbour by bringing before him a glaring truth which contradicts some cherished opinion, political, religious, or moral, or which, still worse, runs counter to his personal interests.

The Trobrianders maintain that mention of such likenesses can only be made to insult a man. It is, in fact, a technical phrase in serious bad language to say *migim lumuta*, "Thy face thy sister's," which, by the way, is the worst combination of kinship similarity. This expression is considered quite as bad as "have intercourse with thy sister!" But, according to a Trobriander, no sane and decent man can possibly entertain in a sober dispassionate mood such an outrageous thought as that anyone should in the slightest degree resemble his sister (see ch. xiii, sec. 4).

Still more remarkable is the counterpart to this social dogma; namely, that every child resembles its father. Such similarity is always assumed and affirmed to exist. Where it is really found, even to a small degree, constant attention is drawn to it as to a thing which is nice, good and right. It was often pointed out to me how strongly one or other of the sons of To'uluwa, the chief of Omarakana, resembled his father, and the old man was especially proud of the more or less imaginary resemblance between

PLATE 40

TWO BROTHERS

The similarity between Namwana Guya'u and Yabukwa'u is so striking that it can be seen here in spite of the fact that one of them is shaven in mourning. This picture also shows the transformation in appearance produced by mourning.

[*Ch. VII, 6*]

FATHER AND SON

The chief To'uluwa, bamboo pipe in hand, stands in front of his house; his son Dipapa, holding his fa-

himself and his youngest son, Dipapa (see pl. 41). Especially were the five favourite sons of himself and Kadamwasila each said to be exactly like his father. When I pointed out that this similarity to the father implied similarity to each other, such a heresy was indignantly repudiated. There are also definite customs which embody this dogma of patrilineal similarity. Thus, after a man's death, his kinsmen and friends will come from time to time to visit his children in order to "see his face in theirs." They will give them presents, and sit looking at them and wailing. This is said to soothe their insides because they have seen once more the likeness of the dead.

How do the natives reconcile the inconsistency of this dogma with the matrilineal system? When questioned they will say: "Yes, maternal kinsmen are the same flesh, but similar faces they have not." When you inquire again why it is that people resemble their father, who is a stranger and has nothing to do with the formation of their body, they have a stereotyped answer: "It coagulates the face of the child; for always he lies with her, they sit together." The expression *kuli*, to coagulate, to mould, was used over and over again in the answers which I received. This is a statement of the social doctrine concerning the influence of the father over the physique of the child, and not merely the personal opinion of my informants. One of my informants explained it to me more exactly, turning his open hands to me palm upwards: "Put some soft mash (*sesa*) on it, and it will mould like the hand. In the same manner, the husband remains with the woman and the child is moulded." An-

other man told me: "Always we give food from our hand to the child to eat, we give fruit and dainties, we give betel nut. This makes the child as it is."

I also discussed the existence of half-castes with my informants, children of white traders married to native women. I pointed out that some look much more like natives than like Europeans. This, again, they simply denied, maintaining stoutly that all these children have white men's faces, and giving this as another proof of their doctrine. There was no way of shaking their conviction, or of diminishing their dislike of the idea that anyone can resemble his mother or her people, an idea condemned by the tradition and the good manners of the tribe.

Thus we see that an artificial physical link between father and child has been introduced, and that on one important point it has overshadowed the matrilineal bond. For physical resemblance is a very strong emotional tie between two people, and its strength is hardly reduced by its being ascribed, not to a physiological, but to a sociological cause—that of continued association between husband and wife.

I have to record one more important assertion of father-right in this matrilineal society, one of a purely social and economic nature. That there is a compromise between the two principles of matriliny and paternal influence in social and economic matters, we have already seen; but it is worth while to restate this briefly here, and to mention its most peculiar feature.

The matrilineal principle is maintained by the more

rigid rules of tribal law. These rules decree absolutely that a child must belong to the family, sub-clan, and clan of its mother. Less absolutely but still very strictly, they regulate the membership of a village community and the office of magician. They also assign all inheritance of land, privileges and material goods to mother-line. But here a number of customs and usages allow, if not an evasion, at least a compromise and modification of tribal law. By these usages, a father can, for his own lifetime, grant the right of citizenship in his village to his son and bestow upon him the usufruct of canoes, lands, ceremonial privileges, and magic. By cross-cousin marriage, combined with matrilocal residence, he can even secure all these things to his son for life.

All this we know already, but here we have to note one more important difference in the transmission of material goods and privileges, as from maternal uncle to a nephew on the one hand, and a father to a son on the other. A man is obliged to relinquish all his possessions and offices to his younger brother or maternal nephew at death. But usually the younger man wants to possess some of these things during his senior's lifetime; and it is customary for a maternal uncle to part with a portion of his gardens or some of his magic while he is still living. But in such cases he has to be paid for it, and the payment is often quite substantial. It is called by the special technical name *pokala*.[1]

When a man gives any of these things to his son, on

[1] This word has more than one meaning: it denotes several types of economic transaction. Compare *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, index s.v. *pokala*.

the other hand, he does it of his free will, and quite gratuitously. Thus, a maternal nephew, or younger brother, has the right to claim his share, and always receives it if he gives the first instalment of the *pokala*. The son relies on his father's goodwill, which, as a rule, works very effectively on his behalf, and he receives all the gifts for nothing. The man who has the right to the things has to pay for them, while the man who receives them without the sanction of tribal law gets them gratis. Of course he has to return them, at least in part, after his father's death; but the use and enjoyment he has had of material benefits remain his, while the magic he cannot return.

The natives explain this anomalous state of things by the father's partiality to his children, which, in its turn, is accounted for by his relation to their mother. The natives say that his free gifts to the children are a reward for the free cohabitation which he enjoys with his wife.[1]

[1] I have dealt with the relation between tribal law and the usages which are formed in reaction to it in *Crime and Custom*, esp. pt. ii, ch. iii.

THE PREGNANCY CLOAK

Photograph taken at a first pregnancy ceremony. Note the mats on which the woman is standing, the basket with magic herbs at her feet (left) and the crown of hibiscus flowers; also the remarkably clear colour of her skin in contrast to her black hair.

[*Ch. VIII*, 1 *and* 4]

PLATE 43

First Charming of the Pregnancy Robes

The breath carrying the sound has to enter the

CHAPTER VIII

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

We had to make a digression into the domain of sociology, led thereto by the Trobriand beliefs concerning procreation and spiritual incarnation and the great influence which these exert upon family and kinship. Let us now resume our consecutive account by considering the course of pregnancy and childbirth. In the first two sections of this chapter I shall describe one observance which is of outstanding interest to the ethnologist: the special public ceremonial performed when a woman is passing through her first pregnancy. The succeeding two sections will be devoted to the customs associated with childbirth and maternity in general.

I

PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST PREGNANCY RITES

Pregnancy is first diagnosed by the swelling of the breasts and the darkening of the nipples. At this time a woman may dream that the spirit of one of her kinswomen brings her the child from the other world to be reincarnated. If during the next two or three moons her menstrual flow makes no appearance, then, say the natives, it is certain that she has become pregnant (*isuma*). Native embryology teaches that four moons after the ap-

pearance of the *baloma* in the dream the abdomen begins to swell; and when this stage in a first pregnancy is reached, the relatives of the mother-to-be take steps to provide her with certain ceremonial garments prescribed by custom; a plain white fibre petticoat, and a long cloak (*saykeulo*) of the same material (pl. 42). These will be given to her in about the fifth moon of her pregnancy with a great deal of ceremony, and she will wear them on that occasion for a month or two and also after she has given birth to the child. This ceremony is never performed for an *igamugwa*, a woman who has already been pregnant, but only for an *igava'u*, a woman who conceives for the first time.

As with every other ceremonial occasion in the Trobriands, this presentation of the fibre cloak has its place in a definite sociological scheme. The duties connected with it are distributed among certain relatives who subsequently receive an appropriate payment. The task of making the robes and of offering them to the *igava'u* falls to the female relatives of the girl's father—the women whom she calls generically *tabugu*—and the lead is taken by the father's own sister. We have already seen on an earlier occasion of great importance in the life of a girl, namely when her marriage is about to be concluded, that it is the father, and not her official guardian, the mother's brother, whose consent is decisive and who has to supervise the whole affair. Again, in this later crisis, it is the father and his matrilineal kinswomen who take the active part. The father summons his sister, his mother, and his niece, and says to them: "Well, come to my house and cut

the *saykeulo* for your niece, my daughter." The father's sister then takes the lead, and rouses as many of her kinswomen as possible to help in the work. They come together, talk the matter over, and arrange when they will begin. The *saykeulo* is always made in front of the father's house, or, if he be a chief, on the central place of his village. The women sit down in a wide circle round a heap of banana leaves to which every worker has contributed several bundles, frayed ready for use. Then the pieces are bound together, amid continuous chatter and a hubbub of voices and laughter. It is an exclusively female gathering, and no man with any sense of decency and etiquette would come near. Four garments have to be made: two long mantles and two skirts. One of the mantles is to be worn at the initial celebration of first pregnancy and the second when the mother first appears in public after her confinement; the two skirts are also for use after the birth. The four garments can be easily finished at one sitting, though a second is sometimes necessary when there are too many gossips present for the work to go quickly. When the garments are finished, usually in the afternoon, the workers pass to the magical part of the performance. For, as always in the making of a really important object, or one which has to be endowed with definite properties and powers, magic is an essential part of the process of production.

I had good opportunities for studying the magic of pregnancy robes. I observed and photographed the rites in progress at the village of Tukwa'ukwa, and in the same village I obtained the formula of *saykeulo* magic, as it

was then recited, also I discussed the ceremonial with the actual performers, as well as with women in other localities.

The rite is simple, but interesting, for it reveals the native ideas of the nature of magical force and of the way in which it operates. A mat is spread on the ground and the four pregnancy garments are placed upon it (pl. 43). The women have brought with them the fleshy lower parts of certain creamy white leaves, which come from a lily plant bearing a snow-white flower. These are cut into pieces (pl. 44) and strewn over the robes. Those among the robe-makers who know the formula—and there are always several of them—kneel round the bundle, and, bending over it, thrust their faces right into the fibre stuff (pl. 43), so that it may be well permeated with the breath which carries the magic words:

"O *bwaytuva* (a bird similar to the reef heron but with quite white plumage), hover over Waybeva (the creek of Tukwa'ukwa village), swoop down to Mkikiya (the waterhole of the village)! O *bwaytuva,* hover over Mkikiya, swoop down to Waybeva!"

This is the exordium (*u'ula*), the opening part of the magical formula, in which, as we see, a white bird is invited to hover over the bathing place and the principal water supply of the village.[1] Then follows the main part (*tapwana*) of the spell. In this the phrase *bwaytuva ikata*—"the *bwaytuva* bird sharpens" (i.e. makes brilliant or resplendent)—is repeated with various words, each of

[1] For the structure and general characteristics of the Trobriand spells see *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* ch. xviii.

which describes a part of the pregnancy robe. In the Trobriands, as no doubt in every other society, each detail of a lady's garment is carefully defined and has its specific name. These are enumerated and coupled one by one with the leading phrase. Thus the formula contains a series of such incantations as "the *bwaytuva* bird makes resplendent the top hem of the robe," "the *bwaytuva* bird makes resplendent the fringe of the robe," and so on. Then the same phrase is repeated with various words describing parts of the body: "the *bwaytuva* bird makes resplendent the head of my *tabu* (my brother's child)," "the *bwaytuva* makes resplendent the nose of my brother's child"; and so on to the cheeks, the chest, the belly, the groins, the buttocks, the thighs, the knees, the calves, and the feet. The formula thus enumerates every part of the body with a consistent pedantry characteristic of Trobriand magic. The end-part (*dogina*) runs thus: "No more is it her head, her head is like the pallor before dawn; no more is it her face, her face is like the white sprouts of a young leaf of the areca plant; praise her by robbing her house! praise her by demanding a *tilewa'i* (flattery gift)!"

This formula expresses, in terms of magic, a wish to improve the personal appearance of the wearer of the robes, and it is especially associated with the whiteness of her skin. A bird of beautiful form and of brilliantly white plumage is invoked at the beginning, and its name acts as the most powerful charm in the principal part of the formula. Its association with the names of the creek and the waterhole in which the pregnant woman has to

bathe and wash, may possess the power to whiten her skin.

The conclusion anticipates the result, a form very common in the Trobriand spells: the face of the pregnant woman becomes pallid like the white sky before dawn, and like the young sprouts of areca. The last two sentences of the formula refer to the curious custom which allows anyone who gives flattery or praise after a remarkable achievement or performance and removes a piece of decoration as a pledge, to demand a special gift, *tilewa'i*. In the case of a still more remarkable achievement, the lucky man who is to gain by it may have to see all his belongings on which the members of the community can lay hand *kwaykwaya*—that is, "taken away as expression of admiration." The remarkable achievement thus foreshadowed in the first pregnancy rites is the resplendent whiteness of the pregnant woman's skin.

From another village—Omarakana—I obtained the initial fragment of the magic used there by certain women. In this formula also a bird is addressed:

"O white pigeon, come, lull our pregnancy cloak to sleep. I shall go and lull your egg to sleep."

The pigeon invoked is notable for the whiteness of its plumage and of its egg's shell. The "lulling" of the pregnancy cloak refers, it is said, to the child to be born, whose skin should also be made white. We shall have to speak at some length about this fundamental idea of whitening the skin which underlies the pregnancy ceremonial.

In their general character, the proceedings are similar to most rites in the Trobriands. The women finish the

PLATE 44

CUTTING THE WHITE LILY LEAVES

[*Ch. VIII*, 1]

robe and then, in very much the same business-like manner, go on to the magic. The white lily leaves are cut by one of them immediately after the robe is finished (pl. 44), and the garment is spread on the mat by another. While the magic is being recited (pl. 43), no disturbing noises are allowed, but neither is anyone excluded; the onlookers adopt no special attitude, nor have they any observances to keep. After the women have impregnated the robes with the magical virtues of the spell, they beat the bundle with their palms. This increases the garments' power of imparting whiteness to the wearer. The tapping is conceived as the "waking up of the garment." The rite is called *yuvisila saykeulo*, the breathing over of the pregnancy robe. The four robes, together with the white cut leaves strewn over them, are now covered with another mat, so that the magic may not evaporate, and the whole bundle is placed in the house of the principal *tabula*, the father's sister.

2

CEREMONIAL OF FIRST PREGNANCY

On the day following the making and charming of the robe, the actual investment of the pregnant woman takes place. With this is associated her public bathing and washing and her magical adornment. I shall describe the ceremony as I saw it in the village of Tukwa'ukwa, where, in May, 1918, I and my friend, the late Mr. B. Hancock, were able to take photographs of it (pls. 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, and 50). My friend had also photo-

graphed and recorded the ceremony about a year before when it had taken place in the same village (pls. 42, 47, and 48). In the course of my narrative, I shall indicate such local differences as obtain between the coastal villages, of which Tukwa'ukwa is one, and the inland settlements, distant from the seashore.

Very early in the morning, the whole village, or at least all its female inhabitants, are astir and preparing for the spectacle. The *tabula* (father's sister and other paternal relatives) forgather in the father's hut, where the pregnant woman awaits them. When all is ready, the prospective mother proceeds to the seashore, walking between two of her *tabula*.

From the inland villages not too far distant from the sea, the procession would also go down to the beach; but those villages far enough away to consider themselves "inland people" perform the pregnancy bath at the waterhole where they usually wash. If the woman is of high rank, she will be carried all the way to the shore or to the waterhole. In the ceremony, only women take an active part.

Tukwa'ukwa lies right on a tidal inlet of the lagoon, and the woman was carried to the beach by her female *tabula*. Since this is a purely female ceremony, good manners indicate that no man should participate, and men would not enter the water to look at the performance. There is no specific taboo, however, nor were any objections raised to my presence.

Arrived at the water's edge, the women arrange themselves in two rows, facing each other, and join hands with

THE WAY INTO THE WATER

[*Ch. VIII, 2*]

their opposite partners crosswise, in the manner called by children "queen's chair." Over this living bridge the pregnant woman walks, holding on by the women's heads, and as she advances, the rear couple move to the front, constantly extending the bridge. Thus they go some distance into the water, the pregnant woman walking dry foot on the arms of her companions (pl. 45). At a certain point she is allowed to jump into the water. Then they all begin to play with one another, the prospective mother being always the centre of the game. Her companions splash water over her, and duck and drench her to the utmost, all in a spirit of exuberant good-natured playfulness (pl. 46). It is the duty of the *tabula* to see that the woman is well washed during the ceremonial bath. "We rub her skin with our hands, we rub her surface, we cleanse her."

The drenching and washing being thoroughly done, she is brought on to the shore and placed on a mat. Although on most occasions she is carried by her relatives to the beach, from this moment she has to be completely isolated from the earth, and must not touch the soil with her feet. She is placed on a coconut mat and her *tabula* (father's maternal relatives) proceed to make her toilet very carefully and with an elaborate magic ritual. This magic of beauty has certain affinities with the ceremonial performed by men during the *kula* expeditions (see *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* ch. xiii, sec. 1), though the spells of men and women differ.[1] It is, on the other

[1] I have stated in the above-mentioned work, on p. 336, that "This branch of Kula magic has two counterparts in the other magical lore of the Trobrianders. One of them is the love magic, through which people

hand, identical in spell and rite with the beauty magic performed by women on men at great dancing festivals; in fact, the spells which I obtained at the pregnancy rites and which are given later in this book, are used on either occasion (see ch. xi, secs. 2-4).

After her bath, the pregnant woman has first to be rubbed and dried. This is done ritually. Some coconut husk fibre, which is kept ready at hand, is charmed over with the *kaykakaya* spell by the *tabula* (father's sister) and the skin of the young woman is rubbed.[1] Then some of the soft spongy leaves of the *wageva* plant, which usually serve the native as a natural towel, are charmed with another formula and the woman is rubbed again. After her skin has been thoroughly dried, the pregnant woman is anointed with charmed coconut oil, and the attendants put a new brightly coloured fibre skirt on her, while the wet bathing skirt is removed from underneath. This festive skirt is not one of those recently made for the pregnancy, nor is its putting on associated with any magical rite. But a purely magical action follows: the

are rendered attractive and irresistible. Their belief in these spells is such that a man would always attribute all his success in love to their efficiency. Another type closely analogous to the beauty magic of the Kula is the specific beauty magic practised before big dances and festivities." This statement is slipshod, in that the real counterparts of *mwasila* (*kula* magic) of beauty are the magic performed on dancers and described here in ch. xi, and the magic of pregnancy with which we are dealing just now. The three forms, *mwasila,* pregnancy rites and festive beauty magic are, in fact, akin to each other, though only pregnancy magic and the festive ritual are the same in spell and rite, while the *mwasila* resembles both only in aim and doctrine. Love magic, though presenting some similarities, not only differs profoundly in rite and spell, but is based on a special native doctrine. (Cf. below, ch. xi.)

[1] For the text of this and the subsequent spells here mentioned, see below, ch. xi, sec. 3 and 4. The spells of *mwasila,* quoted on pp. 337-342 of *Argonauts,* should also be consulted.

face of the young woman is stroked with a mother-of-pearl shell while one of the *tabula* mutters a spell of beauty (see ch. xi, sec. 4). The three acts of the ceremonial so far described are supposed to make her skin smooth, clear, and soft, and her appearance generally beautiful. Several successive stages of personal decoration follow, each performed in a ritual manner. First, muttering a magical formula, a *tabula* decorates the prospective mother's mouth and face with red paint. After that black paint is applied to the face with another spell. Then the hair is combed while yet another formula is recited. Red hibiscus flowers are fastened in her hair, and aromatic leaves with charms breathed into them thrust into her armlets. After this the young woman is considered to be fully arrayed.

All this ritual dressing and adornment is associated with beauty magic, which custom and tradition impose at this stage but which stands in no direct connection with pregnancy or the pregnancy robes. Only when this beauty magic has been performed may the proper pregnancy rite, the investment with the long robe, be carried out. The *tabula* place one of the two *saykeulo* (pregnancy robes) on the young woman's shoulders, and once more recite the formula used in the making of it, breathing the charm right into the robe (see pl. 47). It is also customary at this point, though not imperative, to recite over her some magic against the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth, a magic prophylactic against the special evil of sorcery, which is always dreaded at a confinement (see next section).

Throughout this ritual the prospective mother has been standing on a mat, for, as we have already said, her bare feet must not touch the soil after the bath. Now, dressed in full dress and covered with the long fibre mantle, she is lifted up by two of her *tabula* (pls. 48 and 49) and carried to her father's house, where a small platform has been erected on which she is set down (pl. 50). It is customary for a woman of chieftain's rank to go, not to her father's, but to her maternal uncle's house, and there to remain seated on a high platform.

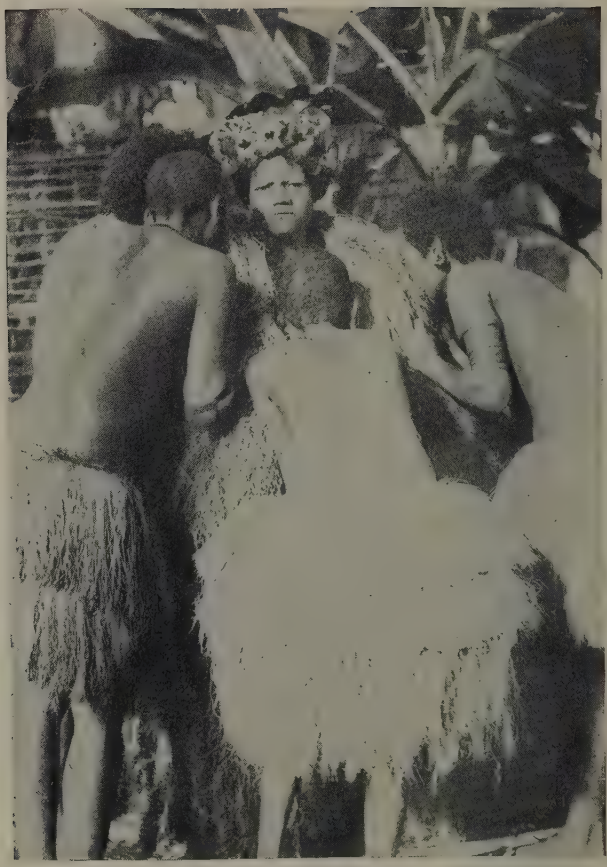
Upon this platform the woman has to stay for the rest of the day. During that time she must remain practically motionless, she must not speak except to ask for food or drink, and even this she ought if possible to do by signs. She must not touch food with her hands; it is put into her mouth by her *tabula*. Her immobility is only broken from time to time that she may wash her face, her arms and shoulders, and rub her skin. For this purpose water is either brought to her in a wooden basin by her husband, or she is carried by two women back to the water's edge, and there she washes standing on a mat. After sunset she is allowed to retire to her father's house to rest, but the next day she has to return to the platform and there resume her seated immobility, and observe all her taboos as on the first day. This is repeated for from three to five days, according to the rank and importance of the woman and of her husband. Nowadays, with the relaxation of all customs, one day is often considered long enough.

When the ceremonial vigil on the platform is over, the

THE RITUAL BATHING

[*Ch. VIII*, 2]

PLATE 47



SECOND CHARMING OF THE PREGNANCY CLOAKS
[*Ch. VIII*, 2]

woman may return for a few more months to her husband's house; or she may go to the house of her father or of her maternal uncle. To one of these she must in any case repair for her confinement. She dresses in the *waykeulo* (pregnancy mantle) until it is worn out. As a rule it lasts for about two months, so that it has to be discarded some two months before confinement.

There is more than one important feature associated with the first pregnancy ritual. As always in the Trobriands, ceremonial services rendered by a certain class of relative must be repaid by the actual, that is maternal, kinsmen of the person served. In this case the work, the magic, and the ritual are performed by the female relatives of the father. In the distribution of food (*sagali*), which immediately follows the ceremony, it is the mother's brother, the brother, and the other maternal kinsmen of the young woman, who do the distributing. If she is a woman of small importance, this distribution takes place before her father's house. But if she, or her father or husband, be a person of high rank, it is carried out on the central place of the village. The procedure is the same as in the mortuary and other ceremonial distributions.[1] The food is divided into heaps and every heap is allotted to a single person, his or her name being called out in a loud voice. After the first pregnancy rites, each one of the *tabula* who has been working at the robe and taking part in the ceremony receives a heap of food. Besides this, the givers of the *sagali* (distribution) usually select

[1] See *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 182-3, and references in Index, s.v. *sagali*, and below, ch. xi, sec. 2.

some specially large and fine yams, or a bunch of banana or areca nut, and carry the gift to the house of the paternal aunt, and perhaps to those of one or two other relatives as well. Such additional payment is called *pemkwala*.

A minor but very interesting ceremonial is associated with this distribution. The father of the pregnant woman —who has nothing to do with the *sagali*—chooses some specially good food and carries it, on his own account, to certain women who are known to possess a form of black magic of which pregnant women stand in great fear. "Black" this magic is, literally as well as metaphorically, for by addressing the *mwanita* (black millepede), the sorceress is able to make a pregnant woman's skin black, as black as the worm itself. The father's gift, which is brought to the house door and belongs to the class called *katubwadela bwala* (house-closing-gift), is intended to forestall and arrest any evil intentions which the sorceress might harbour. As one of my informants put it: "That their anger might come to an end, that they might not perform the evil magic that blackens the skin of that woman, that pregnant one."

This brings us back to the question of the idea underlying the first pregnancy ceremony, and of its aims and purpose. If the average Trobriander is asked the reason or cause, *u'ula*, of a custom, the usual ready answer is one of the stereotyped phrases, *tokunabogwo ayguri* ("of old it has been ordained"), *Laba'i layma* ("it came from Laba'i," the mythological centre of the district), *tomwaya, tomwaya, ivagise* ("the ancients have arranged it"). In other words, the custom has in their eyes a traditional

anction; and every respectable person among savages, as vell as among ourselves, has, of course, to do a thing ›ecause it is done and because it always has been done. 3ut I obtained a certain number of special reasons for .his particular usage besides the general one. Some main-:ain that the ceremony makes for a quick and easy birth; "for," as they say, "the playing about in the water loosens the child in the womb." Some say that it assures the health of the mother and of the baby; and yet others that it is necessary for the proper formation of the fœtus. One woman gave as the reason for the ceremony, that the spirit child was said to enter the woman while she was in the ritual bath, but her statement was not confirmed by anyone else, and I consider it spurious.

But the prevalent opinion of the natives is that the ceremony is to whiten the skin of the woman. This opinion was expressed to me by my best informants among the men, as well as by several women with whom I discussed the matter. It is also in harmony with the text of the magical formula and with the ritual actions, as well as with the nature of the central symbol, the pregnancy mantle. The use of the *saykeulo*, as my informants pointed out, is to keep the sun off the skin. The woman has to wear it after the ceremonial bathing, and when she has had to discard it she should keep indoors as much as possible until the confinement. This idea of whiteness as a thing to be desired is also expressed in the main ceremony of first bathing, and in the subsequent ritual washings, which the pregnant woman continues until her confinement and after it.

It is impossible to get beyond the idea that whiteness

as such is desirable. One thing is clear, however. Although whiteness of the skin is usually regarded as a personal attraction, in this case the woman is not made white in order to be erotically seductive. When I asked why a pregnant woman must try to make her skin white, I received the answer: "If a woman does not wash and anoint, and if her skin is black, people will say this woman is very bad, she has men in her mind, she does not look after her confinement." Again they would say, explaining the motive for the whole ceremony: "This is done to prepare her skin for the confinement washings; and to make her desire to be white. Thus we see when her skin is white that she does not think about adultery." From another informant I received the statement: "The *saykeulo* covers her up completely: breasts, legs, back; only her face you see. It makes her skin white, it shows she does not have connection with men." Thus the woman is made white and beautiful by all this magic. Yet she must hide her charms, she must not attract other men, and she has to keep more stringently faithful than at any other time of her wedded life. Nay, as will be seen, she must even abstain from lawful intercourse with her husband.

3

CUSTOMS OF PREGNANCY AND CONFINEMENT

In the foregoing section the ceremony of first pregnancy was described. Now we proceed to the customs of pregnancy and confinement in general. The ritual bathing, the ceremonial investment with the pregnancy man-

PLATE 48

GUARDED FROM CONTACT WITH EARTH

[*Ch. VIII*, 2]

PLATE 49

RETURN TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE

tle, the magic of whiteness and of beauty, are only performed before the first child is born. But making the skin as white as possible by ordinary means, including the use of the mantle, is a feature of every pregnancy. On subsequent occasions the mantle is made by the woman herself or it may be given by a *tabula* and repaid by her, but as a private transaction only.

Some five months after conception, that is at the time of the ritual bathing in a first pregnancy, the prospective mother begins to observe certain food restrictions. She must abstain from what the natives call *kavaylu'a* (delicacies which consist mainly of fruit). The banana, the mango, the malay apple, the South Sea almond, the paw-paw, the bread-fruit, and the *natu* fruit are forbidden to her. This taboo has reference to the future health of the child. "If she eat *kavaylu'a*, the child will have a big belly; it will be full of excrement and will soon die." The diet of a pregnant woman is henceforth reduced to the staple vegetable food (*kaulo*), that is yams, taro, native peas, sweet potatoes, and other produce of the garden. She is also allowed to eat meat and fish, but she must abstain from certain kinds of the latter. The fish which she is forbidden to eat are such species as live in the submarine holes of the coral. The natives say that just as it is difficult to haul these fish out of their hiding places, so the baby would not easily be brought forth. Fish with sharp, pointed and poisonous fins, which are on that account dangerous to the fishermen, are taboo to the pregnant woman. If she were to eat any of them the child would be ill-tempered and constantly wailing. As

pregnancy progresses and the woman becomes big, sexual intercourse must be abandoned, for, as the natives say, "the penis would kill the child." This taboo is rigorously observed.

Otherwise the pregnant woman leads a normal life almost up to the time of her confinement. She works in the garden, fetches water and firewood, and cooks the food for the household. She has but to shield herself from the sun by wearing the *saykeulo* (pregnancy mantle), wash frequently, and anoint herself with coconut oil. Only towards the close of pregnancy when the first *saykeulo* is worn out and discarded, must she keep out of the sun and therefore abandon some of the heavier work.

As in a first pregnancy, so in all the subsequent ones, the woman, about the fifth month, has to take up her abode in her father's house and she may remain there or she may return again to her husband's house until some time before the confinement, when she invariably goes to the house of her parents or maternal uncle. This removal to the father's or mother's brother's house is a rule observed in every childbirth, the woman leaving her husband's house in about the seventh or eighth month of her pregnancy.

This custom is associated with the strong fear of the dangers which surround a woman in childbed, and which are conceived to be due to a form of evil magic, which is called *vatula bam* (the chilling or paralysing of the uterus). And again, in the face of this great danger, we see once more the interesting recrystallization of kinship ties, the shifting of responsibility and solidarity. Here,

again, only the actual maternal kinsmen and kinswomen are, in the eyes of custom and tribal law, regarded as reliable. The woman has to go to her father's house, for that is also her mother's home, and her mother is the proper person to look after her and the baby. The mother also is concerned in warding off danger with the help of her male relatives, who forgather at the house of the birth and see to it that a proper watch (*yausa*) is kept over the lying-in. Such a watch, kept by men armed with spears who sit all the night long over fires and guard the house and its every approach, is considered the main defence and precaution against sorcerers who, surrounded by nocturnal birds, are supposed to prowl about, attempting to cast the *vatula bam* magic. Primarily, it is the duty of the husband to carry out the *yausa*, but in this he is never trusted alone, and the male relatives of the pregnant woman not only assist but also control him. The interesting thing about this form of sorcery is that it does not only exist in the fear and superstition of the natives, but that it is actually attempted and carried out by male sorcerers. The formula is recited, the house approached, and the evil charm cast according to the prescribed rites.[1] I have even obtained the spells of this magic and the curative counter spells, but as this question essentially belongs to the subject of sorcery, I shall reserve it for a future publication.

When her time approaches, the parental house is made

[1] Cf. the difference between the purely imaginary witchcraft of the flying women (*yoyova*) and the sorcery really carried out by the male wizards (*bwaga'u*), *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, ch. ii, sec. vii, and ch. x, sec. i; and ch. ii of this book.

ready. The father and all the male inmates have to leave, while some female kinswomen come in to assist the mother. When the first pains are felt, the woman is made to squat on the raised bedstead with a small fire burning under it. This is done "to make her blood liquid," "to make the blood flow." At the critical moment the woman in labour and her attendants may repair to the bush, where confinement is sometimes allowed to take place, but more usually they remain in the house.

About the actual travail, I have been able to obtain only the following information. The woman in labour is seated on a mat placed on the ground, with her legs apart and her knees raised. Leaning back, with her hands on the ground behind her, she rests her weight on her arms. At her back stands her sister or some other close maternal relative, who bears heavily on the labouring woman's shoulders, pressing down and even thumping her vigorously. As the natives say: "This woman presses on the parturient one so that the baby may fall out quickly." The mother of the woman in travail waits to receive the baby. Sometimes she catches hold of her daughter's knees. A mat is placed in position, and on this the newly born is received. I was told that the baby is allowed to come to birth by means of natural efforts only, and that it is never pulled out or manipulated. "The child will fall on to the mat, there it lies, then we take it. We do not take hold of it before." The parturient woman tries to help on the process by stopping her breath and so bearing down on the abdomen.

If the labour is very hard they ascribe the fact, of

course, to the evil magic of the *vatula bam* and they summon someone who knows the *vivisa* (curative formula) to counteract this evil. This is recited over the aromatic leaves of the *kwebila* plant, and the body of the woman is rubbed with them. Or else the charmed leaves are placed on her head and then thumped with the fist. Only in the most difficult cases and when the *vivisa* has proved ineffective would the child be manipulated, and even then, from what I gathered, very timidly and incompetently. If the afterbirth does not come out in due course, a stone is tied to the mother's end of the navel string. The *vivisa* (curative formula) is then recited over it, and the woman made to stand up. If that does not help, they are at their wit's end, and the woman is doomed, as they do not know how to extract the afterbirth by manipulation. The natives were very much astonished when they saw how Dr. Bellamy, who for several years had been medical officer in the Trobriands, used to remove the afterbirth.[1]

Some three days after the birth, one of the *tabula* (paternal kinswomen) of the mother of the new-born child heats her fingers at a fire and kneads off the remaining piece of the navel string near to the baby's abdomen. This and the afterbirth are buried in the ground within the garden enclosure. Underlying the custom is a vague idea that it will make the new-born a good gardener, that it will "keep his mind in the garden." After the removal of the umbilical cord, the child may, though

[1] This information I received independently from Dr. Bellamy, at that time Assistant Resident Magistrate and Medical Officer of the district, and from the natives.

it need not, be carried out of the house. The mother has to remain for a month or so confined within the parental hut. Soon after the delivery, a string is twisted by the *tabula* and tied round the mother's chest. Some magic is associated with this, but unfortunately I never learnt what it was nor ascertained the meaning of the ceremony.

4

MOTHER AND CHILD

Mother and baby spend the greater part of their time during the first month on one of the raised bedsteads with a small fire underneath. This is a matter of hygiene, as the natives consider such baking and smoking to be very beneficial for the health, and a sort of prophylactic against black magic. No men are allowed into the house, for, since the woman baked over the fire is usually naked, no male should enter; but there are no supernatural sanctions for the custom, nor is any serious harm done if the taboo should be broken. After a month or so a magic is performed called *vageda kaypwakova;* flowers of the white lily are burned with some dry wood, while the charm is spoken, and the woman is covered with the smoke of the smouldering faggot. This is done on two days in succession, and is supposed to make her skin still whiter. I did not obtain the formula of this magic. On the third day, the *tabula* ritually wash the young mother, and rub her skin with leaves charmed by the beauty spell used in the corresponding rite during the first pregnancy ceremony.

VIGIL ON THE PLATFORM

[*Ch. VIII*, 2]

A Mother and Her First-born

The Woman with the baby is seen wearing her second saykeulo.

The woman then goes out with the baby and makes the round of the village, receiving from friends and her father's relatives small gifts of food called *va'otu*. After she has finished the round, there is a mimic driving home (*ibutusi*) of her by the *tabula* (her maternal aunt and other relatives of the same class), and here she has to remain for another month in seclusion.

During this time husband and wife may only speak together through the door and glance at each other now and then. On no account must they eat together or even partake of the same food. Sexual intercourse between them is strictly taboo for a much longer time, at the least until the child can walk. But the stricter rule is to abstain from intercourse until it is weaned—that is, some two years after its birth—and this stricter rule is said always to be observed by men in polygamous households. The husband, even one who has several wives, must abstain from all conjugal or extraconjugal intercourse until the baby and its mother go out for the first time. A breach of any of these rules is said to bring about the death of the child. In the case of illegitimate children also, if the mother copulates too soon, the child is sure to die.

After the second seclusion, mother and child return to their own household, and the mother resumes her normal life, although much of her time is taken up with the baby. She wears a plain fibre skirt, two of which have been made for her by her *tabula* if this has been her first pregnancy. She also now wears the long mantle, *saykeulo*, the second of the two made for her by the *tabula* before the first pregnancy (pl. 51). If it is a second pregnancy,

or if the baby is illegitimate, the skirt and the mantles are made by herself or privately by a relative, and are as a rule much shorter (see pl. 90). Also a young mother frequently wears a sort of maternity cap, called *togebi*, which is often made by twisting a small grass fibre petticoat into a sort of turban.[1] Into her armlets she must insert a bundle of aromatic herbs (*vana*).

The most important of the cares bestowed on the child is, of course, concerned with its feeding. Besides the mother's breast which, as I was told, but very seldom fails, the child is given other food almost from the first days. Taro, well boiled, is chewed by the mother or by some of her relatives, and the mash, called *memema*, is given to the infant. The natives think that the child would be too weak if it were restricted to its mother's milk. Chewed yams and fish are not given till much later, when the child is almost a year old. The child's head is smeared with coconut oil mixed with charcoal "to make the head strong" as the natives say. One measure of cleanliness is observed day after day from the first hours of the baby's life: it is bathed regularly in warm water, with which the mother also washes her own skin. A specially deep wooden platter, called *kaykwaywosi*, is used for this purpose. The water is warmed by throwing stones heated in the ashes into the platter. Thus a hot and somewhat alkaline water is prepared, and this daily washing, followed by an anointing with coconut oil, is said to keep the skin of the mother and child white. The

[1] *Togebi* is the general name for plaited discs or folded petticoats worn on the head as a support for baskets and other loads carried by women (cf. ch. i, sec. 3, and pl. 6).

weaning of the child takes place long after birth, usually some two years or, as the natives put it, "when it is able to say clearly *bakam bamom* (I want to eat, I want to drink)."

During the weaning the child is separated from the mother, and sleeps with its father or with its paternal grandmother. When it cries at night a dry breast is given to it, or some coconut milk. If it is fretful and loses condition, it is taken to some distant village where it has relatives, or from inland villages to the seaside, so that it may regain its normal health and good spirits.

We have now brought the child up to the time when he will shortly join his playmates in the small children's world of the village. In a few years he will begin his own amorous life. Thus we have closed the cycle which runs through infantile love-making, youthful intrigues, settled liaison, marriage, and its results in the production and rearing of children. This cycle I have described in its main outline, giving special consideration to the sociological aspects as seen in prenuptial intercourse, marriage, kinship ideas, and the interplay of mother-right and paternal influence. In the following chapters it will be necessary to describe certain side-issues and psychological aspects, concerned more particularly with the erotic life before marriage.

CHAPTER IX

CUSTOMARY FORMS OF LICENCE

We must now return to certain aspects of love-making which had to be left out or barely touched upon in relating the life history of the native. The facts described in chapter iii have shown us that, subject to certain restrictions, everyone has a great deal of freedom and many opportunities for sexual experience. Not only need no one live with impulses unsatisfied, but there is also a wide range of choice and opportunity.

But wide as are the opportunities of ordinary love-making for a Trobriander, they do not exhaust all the possibilities of erotic life. In addition, seasonal changes in village life and festive gatherings stimulate sexual interest and provide for its satisfaction. Such occasions, as a rule, lead to intrigues beyond the limits of the village community; they loosen old ties and establish new acquaintanceships; they bring about short passionate affairs which sometimes develop into more stable attachments.

Traditional usage allows, and even encourages, such extensions of ordinary erotic life. And yet we shall see that, though countenanced by custom and public opinion, they are felt to be an excess, to be something anomalous. Usually they produce a reaction, not in the community as a whole, but in the individuals offended by them.

[1] For a discussion of such licensed yet resented usages, see *Crime and Custom*, part ii.

Some excesses—those, that is, which really deserve the name of orgiastic licence—are limited to one district alone, and are viewed by the other natives as quaint local anomalies; while those who practise them are proud, and at the same time ashamed of them. Even the common and outwardly decorous relaxations are considered as escapades and adventures, always to be planned in the penumbra of secrecy, and often resented, if not avenged, by the regular partners.

It has seemed best to divide the description of native sexual life into two parts, and to treat these separately. The normal maturing of the sexual impulse and its issue in matrimony had to be dealt with first. The facts which illustrate how the impulse is given a wider range, how it strays beyond the local group of everyday acquaintances and leads athwart home-made intrigues, will be given in this and the following chapters.

This division corresponds to the native point of view, and makes it possible to present the facts in a far truer perspective than if they were lumped together. But the two parts are closely connected, and the way in which they fit into each other will be evident in the account which follows.

I shall begin with a description of those occasions which regularly, in the course of each year, stimulate erotic interest, and at the same time provide wider opportunities for its satisfaction. There are certain seasonal and periodical games; there are arrangements for picnics, excursions, and bathing parties; there are customary festivities associated with the economic cycle, and finally there is the annual season of festivities.

I

THE EROTIC ELEMENT IN GAMES

Throughout the year, there is a periodic increase in play and pleasure-seeking at full moon. When the two elements so desirable in the tropics, soft light and bracing freshness are combined, the natives fully respond: they stay up longer to talk, or to walk to other villages, or to undertake such enterprises as can be carried out by moonlight. Celebrations connected with travel, fishing, or harvesting, as well as all games and festivals, are held at the full moon. In the ordinary course of tribal life, as the moon waxes, the children, who always play in the evening, sit up later and band together to amuse themselves on the central place of the village. Soon the young boys and girls join them, and, as the moon grows fuller, the maturer youth, male and female, is drawn into the circle of players. Gradually the smaller children are squeezed out; and the round games and competitive sports are carried on by youths and grown-ups. On specially fine and cool nights of full moon, I have seen the whole population of a large village gathered on the central place, the active members taking part in the games, with the old people as spectators.

The younger men and women, however, are the main players, and the games are associated with sex in more than one way. The close bodily contact, the influence of moonlight and shadow, the intoxication of rhythmic movement, the mirth and frivolity of play and ditty—

CHILDREN IN A ROUND GAME

[*Ch. IX*, 1]

A Figure Game

A Group of Girls

Three adolescent girls of Omarakana visiting Isupwana, one of the chief's wives. On the right Itana, second from the left Geumwala. The three girls on the left are wearing the underskirt only.

[*Ch. III, 3; also ch. X, sec. 4*]

all tend to relax constraint, and give opportunity for an exchange of declarations and for the arrangement of trysts. In this book we are chiefly concerned with the erotic element in games, but in order not to lose the right perspective, it must be realized that this is but one aspect of them. Children's play and adult games often contain no such element, and in none of them is it the only interest, or even the chief inducement to participation. Love of athletics, the need for exercise, competition, display of skill and daring, æsthetic satisfaction and a sense of fun, are each quite as important as the sexual element.

The games which are played on moonlit evenings on the central place of the village are perhaps the most important of all. They usually begin with a round game of "ring-a-ring-a-roses" type, called *Kasaysuya* (pl. 52).[1] Boys and girls join hands and sing, while they move first slowly and then, with the quickening rhythm of the chant, spin round faster and faster, until, tired out and giddy, they stop, rest, and begin again in the reverse direction. As the game progresses, and one ditty follows another, the excitement grows. The first ditty is one which begins with the words, "*kasaysuya, saysuya,*" referring to a bush after which the game is named. Each time they start on a new round, a new ditty is chanted. The rhythm in song and step is at first slow, grows rapidly quicker, and ends in a swift staccato repetition of the last syllables as the

[1] This and the following illustrations (pls. 52-6) were taken whilst the children and youths were demonstrating the details of the games. The actual performances take place always after nightfall, and could not be photographed. The difference consists mainly in the presence of spectators, who are not to be seen in these illustrations.

players whirl round and round. Towards the end of the game usually the rhymes become rather ribald.

These are examples of such *kasaysuya* ditties with sexual allusions:

I

Taytulaviya, viya, taytulabeula, beula (repeated)
furious taytu, stout taytu
Kavakayviyaka, kwisi tau'a'u
Enormous penis (of) men
Isisuse wa bwayma.
They sit in food-house.
Toyatalaga popu
Fornicator excrement.

Free Translation

O, the rapidly growing taytu yams, O, the stout taytu yams.
Men with enormous penises sit on the food-house platforms
(i.e. keep away from women)—they are pederasts!

II

Imayase la kaykivi
They bring his soliciting message (of)
tokaka'u (repeated).
widower.
Ipayki nakaka'u.
He [she] declines widow.

karaboywa *kwila* *tokaka'u.*
It remains idle penis (of) widower.

Free Translation

They brought her the invitation to lie with him from the widower—
But the widow refused.
So the widower's penis had to remain idle!

This ditty, I was told, would be sung if a widower were present, especially if he were too enterprising in his amorous offers, or if he misdirected them. It would also be sung if a woman wanted to stimulate his interest and encourage him.

III

Yokwamiga tau'a'u miyawimi sayduwaku.
You indeed men your pubic leaves duwaku piece.
Saydukupi, kupi.
Short piece, short.
Galaga takakaya kukupi.
No indeed we fornicate short (things).

Free Translation

O men you use *duwaku* strips for your pubic leaves:
They are short strips, far too short!
Nothing so short will induce us to fornicate with you!

IV

Yokwamiga vivilaga midabemi siginanabu,
You indeed women indeed your skirts (a flimsy leaf),

Siginapatu, *patu.*
(Flimsy leaf) narrow, narrow.
Galaga, *takakaya* *patu.*
No indeed we fornicate narrow (holes).

Free Translation

O women, you use the siginanabu leaves for your skirts:
They are narrow leaves.
Nothing so narrow will induce us to penetrate you.

The two chants are counterparts of one another, and show the typical kind of joke made about the dress of the other sex. My informant stated emphatically that they mean simply: "*Gala takayta kaykukupi kwila—gala takayta kwaypatu wila,*" "We do not copulate (with one having) a short penis, we do not copulate (with one having) a narrow cunnus."

v

Yokwamiga giyovila *kaynupisi nunimiga.*
You indeed women of rank small your breasts indeed.
Kaykawala *mitasiga* *gweguyaga.*
Impressionable their eyes men of rank indeed.
Kamilogi *babawa,*
Your copulating support earthen mound,
kamiyaguma
your lime-pots
kwe, kwe, kwe.
(make) kwe, kwe, kwe.

Free Translation

O women of rank, your breasts are small indeed,
But the eyes of men of rank are lecherous.
You copulate on the ground, and while you do that, your lime-pots produce a rattling sound *kwe, kwe, kwe.*

Social games always begin with this rhythmic running in a circle. Other figure games follow, in several of which only two people participate. Thus, a boy will put his feet on one of the thighs of another boy or man, who, standing up and holding him by the hands, swings in a circle (pl. 53); or two boys sit facing each other with the soles of their feet together, get a good grip on a stick, held between them, and try to lift each other off the ground. This is a form of "cock-fighting." Most of the games, however, are played by many people; sometimes they are very conventionalized and remote imitations of serious pursuits, and sometimes they represent the behaviour of animals. Thus in "Dog's Tail," two rows of boys face each other, and move to left and right; in "Rats" a row of boys squat and hop one after another (pl. 54); in "Cooking Pot," boys in the same position move slowly from one foot to the other; in "Fishing of Kuboya," boys advance in single file, the last one being caught by two who stand on either side with raised arms and let the others pass (pl. 55). In this last we find the elements of our "Oranges and Lemons." More elaborate figures are enacted in "Stealing of the Bananas," "The Parrot," and "The Fire." All these games with-

out exception are accompanied by rhymes which are sung sometimes at the beginning, sometimes right through the game, and sometimes, as in "Bananas," at appropriate moments in the action. In none of these games is there any direct erotic element, but they all provide opportunities for contact and for the handling of one another, for teasing and an exchange of jokes. In contest games, such as "Rats," "Dog's Tail," and "Fishing," only boys take part as a rule. In the more elaborate games, such as "Fire," "Bananas," and "Parrot," both sexes participate.

2

GAMES INVOLVING PHYSICAL CONTACT

This, also, is the invariable rule in the following games, which admit of even more intimate physical contact. The *sina* game forms part of the bathing ritual in the pregnancy ceremony, and has been described in the previous chapter. In the village, boys and girls play it together. There is also a game in which the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk, reciting a chant, round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot. The fun of the game consists in squeezing the knot very tightly. It is then unrolled gradually by reversing the motion faster and faster, till at the end the others run round and round the fixed end until the chain breaks. Another game begins by two of the players sitting back

to back; two more sit between the legs of each, serving as a support, and then two more between the legs of the second pair, and so on; and so seated they sing and begin to push backwards; the row which pushes the other one out of position wins. In both these games, close proximity lends itself to the preliminaries of love-making.

The favourite and most important game is a tug-of-war, *bi'u* (literally pulling). A long stout creeper is cut and an equal number of players, each standing behind another, take hold of either half of the creeper; usually the game starts somewhere in the middle of the village place (*baku*). When all are in position, one side recites half the ditty, the other responds with the second half, and as the recital ends they begin to tug. Sometimes it is men against women; sometimes by accident or preference, the sides are mixed. Never is there any division according to clan, though kinship taboos between men and women are always observed, so that brother and sister, for instance, never stand near each other. Each side strives to "get the other going," and the real fun begins when one side proves itself the stronger and drags the other. A great deal of roughness is displayed in this game, also a considerable amount of disregard for any damage done to houses, young trees, or domestic objects lying about. When it is played in the form of a *kayasa*, a competitive arrangement of which we shall speak presently, houses, yam stores, and young trees are said to be destroyed and people are sometimes injured.

The main interest in these competitive games of strength and skill lies in the game itself; but many of

the players make use of them for erotic purposes. Not only does physical proximity allow of certain intimacies not otherwise possible, but, as we shall see later, it is indispensable for the exercise of some forms of love-magic.

Late at night, usually as a climax to the other games, the natives play "Hide and Seek" (*supeponi*). When this game is played on a large scale, the sides start from the central place, but hide outside in the *weyka*, the village grove (pl. 56). As a rule the sexes divide, women and men hiding alternately. When one player finds another he has to chant a ditty in a loud voice. Those who are not found for a long time, return by themselves, each singing a special phrase, as he or she arrives at the meeting-place. As with the tug-of-war, this game is extremely popular, and the sexual motive is without doubt partly responsible for this. Couples will arrange to look for each other or to meet at some particular place, and it is easy to see how well this game is designed for trysts, though probably such are mainly of a preliminary nature. It is accordingly not considered proper for married women to join in "Hide and Seek."

On fine days the boys and girls will often arrange an excursion to some favourite spot. Usually they take food and cook it on a beach, or among the coastal rocks, or at some specially attractive waterhole. Sometimes they combine the excursion with fruit-gathering, fishing, or bird-trapping. At such times lovers will walk apart for greater intimacy. In the season of sweet flowering plants and trees they gather blossoms, adorn each other with

Rats

[*Ch. IX*, 1]

PLATE 55

THE FISHING OF "KUEOIA"

[*Ch. IX*, 1]

garlands, and even with paint, and thus æsthetically celebrate the occasion.

On hot days in the season of calm weather, boys and girls repair to the beach, to waterholes, and to creeks, where they engage in bathing games. Each game has its stereotyped action and its special name; and most of them are accompanied by a chant. The players swim and dive in groups; or stand in a row, chanting a ditty, and, as it ends, fall backwards into the water and swim away on their backs. Again, they stand in a ring, facing inwards, sing a few words, and then splash one another. There is a game which commemorates an old legend about the change of a man into a dugong. They also know the use of the surfboard and amuse themselves with it on the open sea-beach.

It is difficult to say exactly how far an erotic interest enters into these games. As in all the other games, so far described, the observer can see nothing in the slightest degree indecorous, but from conversations with natives and from their personal confidences, it is clear that amorous intrigues frequently start on such occasions. The splashing often passes into wrestling, and water games present the human body in a fresh and stimulating light.

3

SEASONS OF LOVE AND FESTIVITY

The games on the central village place are played, for the most part, between May and September, the cool season of the trade winds. There are no bathing games

in these months, as a strong wind blows during the midday hours. Water games are most popular in the hot seasons between the dry and the rainy weather, from February to May, and during October and November. These latter months—the spring of the Southern Hemisphere, and, in the Trobriands, the calm season following the dry months of the trade winds—are also the time of harvest celebrations.

Harvest time is one of joy and social activity, of constant visits between the communities, of competition, display, and mutual admiration. Each village must send out its parties of boys and girls, with gifts of food. They wear a special dress, put aromatic leaves into their armlets and flowers into their hair, and a few lines of paint upon their faces. The girls put on a new fibre petticoat (pl. 61), the boys a fresh pubic leaf. At times the central place is crowded with such harvest carriers (pl. 57). Such festive visits are an occasion for making new acquaintances and for a display of personal beauty, and thus lead to intrigues between members of different communities.[1] All the harvest customs favour erotic pursuits—visits to other villages and the added freedom, the gay mood and the care taken in personal adornment. After sunset, on the pretext of visiting the gardens, parties of boys and girls amuse themselves in other villages, returning home late at night. The fervour of these activities increases towards the full moon.

[1] For the sociological and economic systems which underlie the distribution of the crops at harvest and the gifts between villages, see my article in *The Economic Journal,* March, 1921, and ch. vi of *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*

The harvest period is directly followed by the *milamala*, the annual feast associated with the return of ancestral spirits to the village.[1] The inaugural ceremony is held at a certain full moon, and is followed by a month of dancing which reaches its climax at the next full moon. On the last few days before full moon, certain solemn celebrations are held, dances in full dress are performed, and offerings made to the spirits of the departed. The whole interest of the community is concentrated on these final celebrations. Men and women are intent on producing an effect of lavishness, on doing honour to their ancestral spirits and thus to themselves, and in general on achieving that renown (*butura*) so dear to the heart of the Trobriander. The dances during this time are never directly associated with sex, but they serve to establish the fame of good dancers and thus to add to their personal charm. On the night after the full moon, the spirits are ceremonially driven away from the villages, and all dancing stops.

A period of quieter festivity follows the *milamala*, that of the *karibom*. After the evening meal, the village drummers, standing in the centre of the village place (*baku*), beat out a slow rhythm. Soon children, old men and women, youths and maidens, assemble in the central place and begin to walk round it. There is no special step, no complicated rhythm; only a slow, regular, monotonous walk. Such *karibom* walking takes place also in the

[1] For a detailed description of beliefs and practices associated with the *milamala* see my articles, "Baloma, the Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands," in *Journal R. Anthrop. Inst.*, 1916, and "Lunar and Seasonal Calendar," *ibid.*, 1927. Cf. also ch. xi, sec. 2, of this book.

earlier stages of the *milamala* month, to be replaced towards its end by regular dancing.

The slow rhythmic walk of the *karibom* is to a great extent a social promenade. In place of the single file of the ordinary dance, two or three people walk abreast; conversation is allowed and free choice in the matter of partners. An old man or woman will be seen leading a grandchild by the hand or carrying it. Women, sometimes with babies at the breast, gossip together, and lovers walk arm-in-arm. Since the *karibom* usually falls on dark, moonless evenings, it lends itself to erotic approaches even more than the ordinary games, and considerably more than the regular dancing. There are a number of modes of erotic attack which can be practised during the *karibom* by a boy walking immediately behind the object of his fancy. From this position he can clasp her breasts, a proceeding which, as the natives say, is useful in stimulating her erotic interest, and is also a condition of certain forms of love-magic. Or else he may hold certain aromatic herbs under her nose, the smell of which, by its own virtue alone or by this enhanced with magic, exercises a powerful erotogenous effect. Or, if he be enterprising and his desire strong, he may, parting the fringe of her grass skirt, insert a finger in her vulva.

During the whole period of this festival, but more especially during the first part, the *milamala*, visits between communities take place. Sometimes these visits are official and ceremonial, as when one community is invited by another to admire a newly acquired dance, or to sell one of their own to it. A special term *laga* is applied to the

sale of dances and one or two other privileges and titles.[1] For such an occasion, the whole community, with its headman and best dancers, moves in a body to the other village and there ceremonially performs the dance, instructing the purchasers in its intricacies (pl. 58). The visit is always returned. Large gifts (*va'otu*) are associated with such visits, and have, as always, to be returned in an equivalent form. But sometimes groups of youths and maidens, boys and girls, will go from one village to another for their private pleasure, and join in the local *karibom* (slow rhythmic walking). In this way new acquaintances are made and more or less temporary intrigues begun, distance and strangeness adding spice to the adventure.

Thus, in normal years, the festive mood of the *milamala* spreads itself through the dull round of the *karibom*. But if the food be plentiful and the festive mood exuberant; if there are special reasons for celebration or some need to comfort the spirits of the people, as after a defeat in war or an unsuccessful *kula* expedition, then the period of dancing is deliberately prolonged. Such an extension is called *usigola*, "together for a dance" (*usi* from *wosi* = dance, *gola* = to accumulate or forgather). It may last one, two, or even three months. Like the *milamala*, this extension has its inaugural ceremony, its intermediate feasts, and its climax in an orgy of feasting and dancing which may last for several days. People from friendly villages are invited; they arrive with presents and return home laden with counter-gifts. All that has

[1] Cf. *Argonauts*, p. 186.

been previously said with reference to the sexual opportunities offered by the main festival period obviously applies also to the *usigola*.

4

CEREMONIAL GATHERINGS: KAYASA

The *usigola* (extension of dancing period) is only one type of the festivities into which the *milamala* may be extended. The generic name for such periods of competitive obligatory dancing, amusement or other activity is *kayasa*. A *kayasa* is always organized upon a definite pattern, with a ceremonial according to its kind; and it has, in some aspects, the binding force of law. A *kayasa* need not be specially a period of amusement. There are *kayasa* of economic activities, such as gardening, fishing or the production of shell ornaments. But although the *usigola* belongs to this type of communal activity, it is never called *kayasa;* nor is this term applied to competitive ceremonial and obligatory expeditions of the *kula* type. Such special *kula* expeditions are always called *uvalaku*.[1]

In certain cases the activity round which a *kayasa* centres is an exclusive privilege of the community or clan; but whatever its kind, initiative must always be taken by the headman, who acts as *tolikayasa* (master of the *kayasa*). It is he who, with the assistance of his clans-

[1] For a description of the *uvalaku*, cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific, passim.* The place of the *kayasa* in economic life has been indicated in my article on the "Primitive Economics of the Trobriand Islanders," *Economic Journal,* March, 1921. Its legal aspect has been referred to in *Crime and Custom in Savage Society,* p. 61.

men and kinsmen, has to provide the wherewithal for the big feast or, rather, the ceremonial distribution of food (*sagali*) which inaugurates the proceedings. Those who partake of this—and practically all the community have to do so—are under a formal obligation to exert themselves for the whole period, so that the *kayasa* may be a success; and, at times, when their zeal in work or amusement shows signs of flagging, a new feast is given to revive enthusiasm. There is a reason behind this fiction of a legal obligation towards the leader on account of food and gifts received: for the glory of a successful *kayasa* devolves principally upon the *tolikayasa* (the leader or owner of the *kayasa*). But, as we know already, there is also scope for the ambition of any participant, and the element of emulation is very strong in all *kayasa*. Each of them includes some form of competitive display or contest, and there is always a pronouncement of public opinion on the result. So that the most successful or energetic participants also receive an individual share of glory.

Among the *kayasa* of pure amusement, we may mention first the tug-of-war game, already described in this section. When played as a *kayasa* it is inaugurated ceremonially by a big distribution of food (*sagali*, see ch. xi, sec. 2). After that it has to be continued night after night in full force, with utter disregard of personal inclination, comfort, or even property, which, as mentioned already, is often damaged. The community divides regularly into two parts; especially good tuggers acquire renown, and the stories of extraordinary feats, of special havoc wrought,

or of long and arduous deadlocks, fill the whole district with the fame (*butura*) of leader and participants. There is a sporting *kayasa*, specially popular in the southern part of the district, in which miniature canoes are sailed competitively. Another type of *kayasa*, called *kamroru*, is performed exclusively by women, and consists of communal singing. This is regarded as a counterpart of the ceremonial dancing, in which, with very rare exceptions, only men take part. In the *kamroru kayasa*, women, in full dress, seat themselves on new mats spread on the central place and, swaying rhythmically, sing certain songs in unison. The men look on from the platforms of the storehouses and admire the most beautiful figures and the finest voices.

There is a more direct erotic appeal in the festivities connected with the sweet-smelling *butia*. The flowering season of the *butia* tree coincides with the *milamala* period (annual feast of the returning spirits), and the flower *kayasa* is therefore only held in those years when owing to mourning there can be no dances in the village. Otherwise the season is always devoted to dancing. The flowers are collected in the jungle, made into wreaths and garlands, and exchanged with a blowing of conch-shells. As the natives put it: "We make *kula* (ceremonial exchange) with *butia* wreaths." In fact, whoever initiates an exchange has to say, as he offers the wreath: *um'maygu'a* (thy valuable present). A small return gift of food or betel-nut is then made, with the words: *kam kwaypolu* (thy preliminary return). Finally a counterpart of the first present is returned to the donor with the words: *um*

TYPICAL SCENERY OF HIDE AND SEEK

[*Ch. IX*, ?]

A Harvest Scene

The picture was taken during a kayasa (*competitive*) *harvest, in which enormous quantities of food were brought to Omarakana on the occasion of the rebuilding of the large yam house* (*to the right*), *which is*

yotile (thy return gift). Thus the exact terminology of the *kula* is followed in these transactions.[1] A festive character is given to the whole proceedings by the groups of people walking about and singing; by the gaily dressed boys and girls taking part in the ceremonial far into the night; and by the sound of the conch-shells, blown as each gift is presented.

The competitive element in the *butia* festival lies in the quality and quantity of the presents received and given, and, as in all forms of such exchange, to give or to receive a magnificent gift contributes to the glory of either side. This *kayasa* provides opportunities for courtship and for the expression of mutual admiration; a would-be lover can display his appreciation of a girl in the magnitude of his gifts, and at the same time flatter her vanity and satisfy her ambition. Thus beauty, erotic interest, ambition, and vanity are the chief interests in this *kayasa*.

A more pronounced part is played by vanity in the festivals of hair-dressing (*waypulu*) and of ornamental shell discs (*kaloma*). The *waypulu* is confined to the islands of Kitava and Vakuta. After a long period during which no deaths have occurred so that the people have been able to grow long hair, a display of this highly valued natural beauty is held (see ch. x, sec. 3). Only men take part in this *kayasa*. They adorn themselves, spread mats on the central place, and, teasing out their hair with the long-pronged Melanesian comb, they sing and display its charm. The women admire and pronounce judgment on the quality and beauty of the hair. The *kayasa* of shell

[1] Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 352-7.

ornaments is held in the villages of Sinaketa and Vakuta. When a large number of these discs have been produced, the men adorn themselves, and day after day, evening after evening, parade the central place.

To a European observer the proceedings of a *kayasa* appear unspeakably monotonous and pointless. The repetition for weeks on end of exactly the same procedure prevents even an ethnographer from regular attendance at any *kayasa*. But, for the native, apart from any feeling of duty, the whole affair has an intense interest and considerable attraction. In this, sex plays a considerable part. For the desire to show off, to produce a personal effect, to achieve *butura* (renown) in its most valued form, that of irresistible charm, contains a pronounced erotic element.

5

ORGIASTIC FESTIVALS

There is, or, at least, used to be till the missionaries came, one *kayasa* which centred round erotic dalliance satisfied in public and that very thoroughly. This *kayasa* was never practised in the northern and central parts of the district, but only by a few villages in the extreme south end of the island of Vakuta. It was called *kamali*, a dialectic variation of the word *kimali*, the erotic scratching, which symbolizes the erotic approach, as does kissing with us. It is a general rule in all districts of the Trobriands that, when a boy and girl are strongly attracted to each other, and especially before their passion is satisfied, the girl is allowed to inflict considerable bodily pain on

her lover by scratching, beating, thrashing, or even wounding with a sharp instrument. However severely he is handled, such treatment is accepted in good part by the boy, as a sign of love and a symptom of temperament in his sweetheart. On one occasion, during the harvest festivities, I had to dress the wound of a boy who came to me with a deep cut in the muscles right across the back under his shoulder-blades. The girl who had made it hovered near in deep concern. I was told that she struck too hard without realizing it. The boy did not appear to mind, though he was evidently in pain, and (so I heard) he reaped his reward that same night. This case was typical. The *kimali* or *kamali* is a form of feminine wooing, a compliment and an invitation, which in the *kamali kayasa* was systematized and carried out on a large scale. Boys in gala dress would walk round the central place singing: girls would come up to them and teasing jokes and repartee would be exchanged, very much as in other *kayasa.* But things were allowed to go very much further. Women, who were expected on such occasions to be much more forward than usual, would pass from teasing to scratching, and attack the boys with mussel-shells and bamboo-knives, or with a piece of obsidian or a small sharp axe. A boy was allowed to run away, and would do so if his assailant were not attractive to him. But it was a sign of manliness and a proof of success to be properly slashed about. Also, when a boy was attracted by a girl, he would, naturally, not run away, but take her attack as an invitation. The ambition of a woman was successively to slash as many men as she could; the am-

bition of a man to carry away as many cuts as he could stand, and to reap the reward in each case.

I have never assisted at such a *kayasa*. As far as I could find out, through the interference of the white missionaries and officials, not one had occurred within twenty years of my arrival. So that data collected about this *kayasa* are what might be called "hearsay documents." The account of scratching and cutting, however, tallies so well with facts observed by myself that I have not the slightest reason to doubt its accuracy. What follows is given with due reservation, though it agrees with the reports about some other Melanesian and Polynesian natives. I was told by several independent informants, both from the districts concerned and from the north, that the relaxation of all control was complete during that *kayasa*. Sexual acts would be carried out in public on the central place; married people would participate in the orgy, man or wife behaving without restraint, even though within hail of each other. This licence would be carried so far that copulation would take place within sight of the *luleta* (sister, man speaking; brother, woman speaking): the person with regard to whom the strictest sexual taboos are always observed (see chs. xiii and xiv). The trustworthiness of these statements is confirmed by the fact that I was told several times, when discussing other forms of *kayasa* in the north, that all of them were carried out in a much more orgiastic manner in the south. Thus at a tug-of-war *kayasa* in the south, men and women would always be on opposite sides. The winning side would ceremonially deride the vanquished with the typical

ululating scream (*katugogova*), and then assail their prostrate opponents, and the sexual act would be carried out in public. On one occasion when I discussed this matter with a mixed crowd from the north and the south, both sides categorically confirmed the correctness of this statement.

In this context two occasional forms of customary intercourse may be mentioned. During the mortuary wake (*yawali*), which takes place immediately after a man's death, people from all the surrounding communities congregate and take part in the songs and ceremonies which last for the best part of the night. When, far into the night, the visitors return home, it is the custom for some of the girls to remain behind to sleep with certain boys of the bereaved village. Their regular lovers must not, and do not, interfere.

Another type of sexual latitude is associated with hospitality given to strangers; but this obligation was more strictly observed in former times when, owing to the greater fear and mistrust of strangers, the visitors were fewer and better chosen. I am told that it was then considered the duty of a girl from the village to act as the stranger's partner for the night. Hospitality, curiosity, and the charm of novelty would make this duty perhaps not very arduous.

The only overseas strangers, who, in olden days, used to voyage regularly, were those who came to the Trobriands on the *kula* trading expeditions. When the ceremonial stages of the visit were over and some exchange of gifts had taken place, the visitors would enter the vil-

lage and hold friendly converse with the inhabitants. It was also the duty of the hosts to provide the guests with food; but this could never be given in the village, since it was against all etiquette to eat within a strange community. Therefore it was taken to the beach where the canoes were moored. Thither the village beauties would carry it on platters, and wait till these were emptied. Friendly talk would ripen into intimacy, presents would be offered by the strangers to the girls, and their acceptance was a sign that the girl was willing. It was considered right, and sanctioned by custom, that the local girls should sleep with the visitors; and for this, also, accepted lovers had not the right to punish or reprimand them.

This holds good especially about the northern half of the island, visited by men from Kitava and the other Marshall Bennett Islands. In the southern villages, visited by the foreign-speaking Dobuans and Amphlettans, the strangers also sometimes slept with the local girls. But this was not so usual, as the Dobuans never reciprocated or allowed their women folk to grant any favours to visiting Trobrianders.

The customs and arrangements so far considered are partly seasonal, partly dependent on special circumstances. The games described at the beginning of this chapter, which take place by moonlight on the central place, are mostly played during the trade-wind season, from May to September. The harvest activities and festivals begin in June and last into August. The *milamala* begins in September and ends in October. Its date is fixed by the appearance of the *palolo* worm, which comes up regularly

A Ceremonial Dancing Demonstration

Dancers from Omarakana instructing the village of Liluta in the Rogayewo, a slow dance performed by men wearing fibre skirts, and holding pandanus streamers in their hands. Most of the spectators were watching from a shady spot behind the camera.

THE "ULATILE" OF KWAYBWAGA

More especially the singers and dancers from that village, photographed as they were going to start a

at a certain full moon. The name for this worm is also *milamala*, and it is sometimes mystically connected with the arrival of the spirits. The *kayasa* is sometimes held during the *milamala* season, but usually it occurs immediately afterwards as an extension of the festival. During the full rainy season which follows, January, February, and March, the telling of fairy tales and gardening are the main social occupations. We shall have to touch upon these presently. Bathing games take place in April and May, October and November, between the dry and wet seasons.

What is the relation of these customs to the normal course of courtship described in chapter iii? They give opportunities for strangers to meet and for erotic interest to pass beyond the confines of the village. This may lead merely to romantic escapades which enrich experience and guide maturer choice within the community. But sometimes such intrigues end in marriage, and then the woman always follows her husband since, as we know, marriage is patrilocal.

6

ULATILE—YOUTH IN SEARCH OF AMOROUS ADVENTURE

The periodical rise and fall of erotic life in the Trobriands might be represented by a curve determined by tribal festivities, ceremonial customs, and economic activities. These, in turn, follow the moon and seasons in their courses. The curve rises regularly at full moon and its highest point occurs at and immediately after harvest.

The drops in the curve are associated with absorbing economic pursuits and sports, with gardening and overseas expeditions. Certain of the festivals favour an overflow of erotic interest beyond the boundaries of a village community.

A liaison between two people who live at a distance from one another, is not too easy. Many special customs of assignation, visit, and tryst, which the natives comprehensively call *ulatile*, tend to assist separated lovers. Such visiting when done by men is called *ulatile*, which means literally "male youth," and describes the group of adolescent boys and young men who often act in a body in work or play (pl. 59). By an extension of meaning, the noun *ulatile* is used to describe "youthful exuberance," or even, more specifically, "sexual activity." We have met with this term already (ch. iii, sec. 2) in the compound *to'ulatile* (young man). Pronounced with a certain intonation, this term conveys the meaning of "gay dog," or even "fornicator." Applied to a woman, it assumes the form *naka'ulatile*, and is used only with the derogatory meaning, "wanton woman," or more precisely, "a woman who desires more than she is desired." In its original etymological implication, it probably means "forward like a man" (see ch. xiii, sec. 4). Used as a verb, the root *ulatile* is applied primarily to males, and it signifies "to go on a love-making expedition," "to have success with women," "to indulge in excessive sexual intercourse." It can be used by extension about women, except when it is applied to an expedition outside the village, in which case it refers only to men.

There are two forms of *ulatile* expedition to which the word applies in a somewhat technical sense. The first is a matter of necessity: a lover must visit his sweetheart in her own village. If, on one of the several occasions described in the previous section, two people from different communities have become strongly attracted by each other, they will arrange a meeting. As a rule the boy has some intimate friend in the girl's village, and this makes things easier, since this friend will help him. It is a matter of etiquette for the lover to adorn himself for the tryst, and this compels him to observe a certain measure of secrecy. He will not walk on the main road, but surreptitiously steal through the bush. "Like a sorcerer he will go; stop and listen; go sideways and push through the jungle; no one must see him." Thus one of my informants likened such *ulatile* to the clandestine expeditions of sorcerers who, on their nocturnal expeditions, must not be seen by anybody.

As he approaches the village he has to be specially careful. In his own village such a passing intrigue, if discovered, would only arouse the jealousy of the accredited lover and start a minor quarrel. But an erotic poacher caught in another community might be seriously mishandled, not only by the jealous lover, but by all the other boys. He might also bring upon his sweetheart the reproaches of her regular lover. However, the main reason for secrecy is that it is enjoined by custom as a rule of the game. The two usually arrange to meet in the jungle near the girl's village. Sometimes the girl guides her lover to the chosen place by lighting a fire; some-

times they agree to imitate the call of a bird; sometimes she marks the way into the chosen spot of the jungle by tearing the leaves in a pattern or by placing leaves on the road.

If the passion stands the test of time and difficulty and ripens into affection, steps are taken to make the liaison permanent and official. The boy may join his friend in the village, and remain there under some pretext as a temporary citizen. Or else the girl will be accepted in his village and come to live there. When taking a village census, I often came across a girl who was staying in the community because she was living with some boy belonging to it. The two would sleep together in a *bukumatula* (unmarried boys' and girls' house) in the same way as an ordinary affianced couple (see ch. iii, sec. 4), and if the liaison went well, it ended naturally in marriage.

Another technical use of the word *ulatile* applies to an entirely different type of love-making expedition. Sometimes a group of boys, who have brought away specially pleasant memories of another community from some festive gathering, will decide to go there in a body, on a regular *ulatile* expedition. Here secrecy is necessary, too. For though such expeditions are customary and, in a way, lawful, they constitute an encroachment on the rights of two other groups, the ordinary sweethearts of the *ulatile* boys, and the youths of the other village. If caught by either party the adventurers would have to face a volley of abuse, or even of blows; for girls in the Trobriands can defend their rights by force, and the boys in each community regard their women folk as their own preserve. The adventurers would, therefore, usually

steal out at night and put on their ornaments outside their village. But once on the main road, they become boisterous and defiant, for this is the proper behaviour on such an occasion. There are even some special bawdy songs, called *lo'uwa*, to which they keep time as they go along.

LO'UWA SONG (1)

Aramwaye!	*Bagigido'u!*	*Bagiwawela!*
Hoho!	Fine necklace!	Necklace of Wawela!

Sayam, Rapa'odi.
Sayam, Rapa'odi.

Bakwatega		*Kadiratume,*
I anchor indeed (on)		Kadiratume (beach),
Isideli	*uni'unatine;*	*itolala.*
He sits by her	young man;	she stands up.
Waydesi!	*kapukapugula*	*Kalamwaya!*
Hallo!	young woman.	Hoho!
Agudeydesi!	*Kalamwaya!*	
Hollay!	Hoho!	

Free Translation

"Hoho—(I come adorned with) a fine necklace,
The necklace of Wawela, like Sayam with the armshell Rapa'odi,
I anchor on a beach in Gawa, a boy sits by his girl,
She stands near him. Hallo! Young woman.
Hurray, hoho, hurray."

Sayam is said to be a man celebrated for beauty; and famous ornaments, such as the Rapa'odi armshell, are associated with attraction, success and love magic. He

appears here adorned with a famous armshell named Rapa'odi, which, as indicated in the free translation, means that the "I" of the song also wears a fine necklace. In the reduplicated form *uni'unatine,* the *n* is a dialectic equivalent of the *l* of *ulatile.*

LO'UWA SONG (II)

Aramwaye! *Bamasisi,* *bamamata;*
Hoho! I'll sleep, I'll wake;

balage *kupira* *saygwa'u.*
I'll hear drum his (of) festival skirts.

Raytagine *layma'i*
It throbs (with dance music) it fetches (attracts)

karisaygwa'u, *okuvalila.*
their festival skirts, on their flanks.

Kala wosi *owadola,* *lakatunenia* *oyamala.*
His song on mouth, his small drum in hand.

Gigiremutu *kudula*
Blackened his teeth

Tokivina *yamtu* *Wavivi*
Tokivina treads (village of) Wavivi

Yamtumutu *Wavivi.*
He treads and treads (through the village of) Wavivi.

Free Translation

Hoho! I awake from my sleep, I hear the festive beat of the drums, as they throb with dance music—attracting women with full-dress skirts, with festive skirts on their flanks. With his song on his mouth,

with his small drum in his hand, his teeth blackened,
Tokivina rhythmically treads in the village of Wavivi,
he walks in dancing rhythm through the village of
Wavivi.

In this short song we have a condensed picture of a *ulatile* situation—the awakening at night, the sound of a distant drum announcing great festivities in a neighbouring village. And here, again, there is a legendary person moving in the background, partly as a good augury, partly as an ideal. The psychology of this traditional worship of personal beauty and charm will be discussed later on.

Such songs, I am told, were also sung in olden days to indicate that the party was neither on the warpath nor on a sorcery expedition, nor bent on any other real mischief. As they approach their goal they become quiet again, for they must not be seen by the village youths. The girls, of course, know when the expedition is drawing near, for everything has been previously arranged in detail. The visitor most familiar with the village creeps near and gives the agreed signal. One by one the girls sneak out of the houses and meet their lovers in the bush. Sometimes the girls are already awaiting them at some pre-arranged meeting place outside. Should this gathering of lovers be detected, a fight might ensue, leading, in former times, even to war between the two communities.

Such *ulatile* expeditions are definite deviations from the regular course of tribal life.[1] They lead invariably to lovers' quarrels in both villages, and to serious dif-

[1] For a discussion of the customary abrogations of law and conflicts between various classes of custom, see *Crime and Custom*, part ii.

ferences between the two communities. They were an important feature of love life in former days when armed expeditions for purposes of love-making were more usual than an individual *ulatile*. Nowadays, however, when it is so much easier and safer for a man or woman to walk alone even at night, the trysting of one boy with one girl is much more common.

To preserve perspective and to place the *ulatile* expeditions correctly in their context of tribal life, it must be realized that there are various occasions, apart from courtship, on which the youth of the village would visit other communities in a body. At harvest and during the dancing season (see pls. 57 and 58), for common games and mortuary feasts, groups of young men, more or less dressed up, can be met on the road or seen paddling along in the large fishing canoes. As a matter of fact, the love-making expeditions from the lagoon villages of the west coast would also be made by water (see pl. 60). Thus a party of boys on the road, decorated and singing, may be bent either on a real *ulatile* expedition, or else on some ordinary inter-village business or amusement; and it is difficult on surface evidence to draw any sharp distinction between erotic and other expeditions.

It is easy to see how inter-village intrigues fit into the general scheme of courtship described in chapter iii. The childish erotic experiences with which the sexual life history of an individual begins always takes place within the community; the *ulatile* is one among the customs which carry erotic interest and those transitory affairs, which are the next stage in development, beyond the village.

"Ulatile" on the Lagoon

[*Ch. IX, 6*]

GIRLS DECORATED FOR A "KATUYAUSI" OR HARVEST VISIT

[*Ch. IX, 3 and 7, also ch. III, 3*]

Such intrigues may become permanent and thus the *ulatile* is one of the ways in which matrimonial choice is extended beyond a single village.

7

KATUYAUSI—A CEREMONIAL ESCAPADE OF GIRLS

In matters of love the Trobriand woman does not consider herself man's inferior, nor does she lag behind him in initiative and self-assertion. The *ulatile* have their counterpart in the *katuyausi,* amorous expeditions of village girls to other communities.

Sometimes these expeditions are simply to avenge too much *ulatile* on the part of the boys. Or, as happens in coastal villages, the men are long absent fishing, trading, or sailing, and the girls seek consolation in another village. At times the incentive is more directly feminine. The girls have equipped themselves with a specially brilliant supply of grass petticoats, and want to display them on a wider stage than their own village. Some of my cynical informants affirmed that a *katuyausi* expedition is the girls' best means of replenishing their store of betel-nut and tobacco and of collecting an armlet or a comb, a pleasing handbag or a new supply of beads.

I am also under the impression that on each occasion the *katuyausi* party offer some pretext for their visit, such as the desire to see the crops, or to admire a new construction, a chief's house or yam-house, or else they pretend to be hawking some object for sale.

Whatever the chief incentive, and the pretext, as soon

as their decision is taken the girls will choose an intermediary to arrange the date and conditions of their prospective visit to the boys of the other village. The procedure of a *katuyausi* expedition differs greatly from that of a *ulatile*. The boys leave after sunset under cover of night, whereas the girls start as a rule early in the afternoon. The boys creep out of the village, but once fairly on the road, sing and behave boisterously. The girls also steal quietly away, but their behaviour is decorous throughout the journey. Near the other village the boys have to hide, but the girls enter the village grove openly, sit down there and put the finishing touches to their toilet. They paint their lips red with betel-nut, draw decorative lines on their faces, and fill their armlets with aromatic herbs (pl. 61). It is etiquette for the local boys to allow them to remain alone on the outskirts of the village until they give the sign for the boys to approach. During this time the girls may sing, play the native (now the imported) jew's harp, and chew betel-nut; when they are ready to receive, they sing the song which is the previously arranged signal for the boys to come nearer. The latter have, of course, been expecting them, and now approach in groups. Soon the whole village community is seated facing the girls, with the exception of their local rivals, who resent the intrusion and sulk, though custom does not allow them actively to interfere with the proceedings.

It is evening by now, and the interesting stage of the visit is approaching. The *katuyausi* party have remained seated, nonchalant and detached (pl. 62). The youths

PLATE 62

"Katuyausi" Party

[*Ch. IX*, 7]

and older men stand facing them, pursuing their own conversations with apparent unconcern. Then banter and jokes begin to pass from one side to the other; the boys come nearer the girls and the ceremony of choice begins. According to custom, the initiative in pairing off should come from the hosts, and each guest has to accept any offer made to her as a matter of etiquette. But, of course, definite preferences between the outstanding individuals of each group exist and are known. An unimportant boy would not dare interfere with the pleasure of his stronger, elder, and more influential comrade, so that in reality the choice is largely based on anterior intrigues and attachments. Each boy then ceremonially offers a small gift to the girl of his choice—a comb, a necklet, a nose stick, a bunch of betel-nut. If she accepts the gift she accepts the boy for that night as her lover. When the boy knows the girl well he presents the gift himself. If he does not, or if he feels too shy, he will ask help of an older man, who hands over the offering with the words, "*kam va'otu*" (*va'otu*—visiting present, present of inducement), "So-and-so gives it to you; you are his sweetheart." Very rarely does a girl refuse or ignore such a present; if she did, she would greatly offend and mortify the man.

After the boys and girls have thus been allotted in pairs, they all, as a rule, go to some spot in the jungle, where they spend the best part of the night chewing, smoking, and singing, each couple keeping to themselves. At times a boy and a girl will leave the main group without any attention being paid to them. Some of the boys

may invite their sweethearts to spend the rest of the night in a *bukumatula* of the village, but usually this presents difficulties. All the arrangements associated with the *katuyausi*, as well as with the *ulatile*, are distinguished by complete decorum, and by the absence of all orgiastic elements. They are carried out, no doubt, in a less delicate manner in the southern villages than in the north, but even in the south they essentially differ from such orgiastic customs as the *kamali*, the *bi'u*, and the custom of the *yausa*, which will be described in the next section.

As far as I could gather, in former times no year would pass without some two, three or four *katuyausi* parties visiting a community. The first missionary had to ask for a special regulation in order to put down this "abominable abuse." At present, as a result of the white man's interference with local custom, combined with his introduction of much worse immorality, the regulated and decorous custom of the *katuyausi* has fallen into decay. But even while I was in the Trobriands, parties of girls from Okaykoda visited Omarakana, and from Kaybola went to Kwaybwaga; also the Kwaybwaga girls avenged themselves on their lovers by going on *katuyausi* to Vilaylima. Early in my stay at Omarakana in 1918, a number of such guests came, at harvest time and ostensibly to admire the yams, and I was even able to photograph them and to watch the earlier part of the proceedings.

The return of a *katuyausi* party to their own village is often a sad epilogue to a gay night. The girls try to enter the village and regain their houses unobserved.

But they are not always successful. If the whole party is waylaid and caught, the reckoning takes place then and there. The culprits are abused, beaten, and, as I was told by several of my informants, sometimes actually violated by their own lovers in public. Several boys would hold a girl, while the rightful owner exercised his prerogative as a punishment. If this be true it is the only exception to that rule of strict decorum in public which is observed by all Trobrianders, with the exception of the people of Vakuta, Okayaulo, and some others of the southern villages.

8

YAUSA—ORGIASTIC ASSAULTS BY WOMEN

We now turn to the extreme south of the main island, and the adjoining island of Vakuta. We have already mentioned these districts, not very honourably, several times. They are in general distinguished ethnologically by a certain coarseness of character and habit which is displayed in many aspects of their life. In sexual matters they are undoubtedly much more crude than the northerners, and have practices which would offend the finer feeling for etiquette and decorum, if not for morals, of the latter. Also, in the past, these villages were on hostile terms with most of their neighbours.

The data which we have given above as to the orgiastic character of one or two forms of *kayasa* receive additional confirmation from another custom which used to be in vogue among these natives. The exact nature of the custom, its full details and its correct perspective, must

unfortunately remain obscure. All I know about it is from hearsay, and the custom is so unlike anything which I have seen myself, that I am unable to add those necessary touches of life which depend on actual observation.

All districts in the Trobriands have the economic custom of female communal labour in the weeding of gardens. Since it is a tedious, monotonous activity, which requires little skill and not much attention, and can be best enlivened by gossip and company, the women work together at each garden in turn, until all the village plots are weeded over. As in all other exclusively feminine occupations, it is bad form for any man to come near them while they are working, or to pay any attention to them save on a matter of business.

Now this communal weeding when practised by women of the villages of Okayaulo, Bwaga, Kumilabwaga, Louya, Bwadela, or by the villages of Vakuta, gives the weeders a curious privilege.[1] If they perceive a stranger, a man from any village but their own, passing within sight, they have the customary right to attack him, a right which by all accounts they exercise with zeal and energy.

The man is the fair game of the women for all that sexual violence, obscene cruelty, filthy pollution, and rough handling can do to him. Thus first they pull off and tear up his pubic leaf, the protection of his modesty and, to a native, the symbol of his manly dignity. Then, by masturbatory practices and exhibitionism, they try to produce an erection in their victim and, when their manœuvres have brought about the desired result, one

[1] Compare map.

THE BEACH OF THE LAGOON

[*Ch. IX*, 9]

BAGIDO'U

The heir apparent is standing at the door of his house; squatting in front of him are some well-known figures: on the right Ortao'u, the "court

of them squats over him and inserts his penis into her vagina. After the first ejaculation he may be treated in the same manner by another woman. Worse things are to follow. Some of the women will defecate and micturate all over his body, paying special attention to his face, which they pollute as thoroughly as they can. "A man will vomit, and vomit, and vomit," said a sympathetic informant. Sometimes these furies rub their genitals against his nose and mouth, and use his fingers and toes, in fact, any projecting part of his body, for lascivious purposes. The natives from the north are very much amused by this custom, which they despise or affect to despise. They love to enter into details, and to demonstrate by convincing mimicry. Local informants from the south confirmed this account in all essentials. They were by no means ashamed of their custom, regarding it rather as a sign of the general virility of the district, and passing on any possible opprobrium to the stranger-victims. Some of my local informants added that at the *yausa*, as this custom is called, women would throw off their fibre skirts, and naked "like a band of *tauva'u*" (evil spirits) pounce upon the man. He also added that hair would be torn from the man's head, and that he would be lacerated and beaten till he was too weak to get up and move away.

9

ACTUALITY OF ORGIASTIC LICENCE

Such is the natives' account of the *yausa*. What are the facts? I never observed them at first hand; partly be-

cause I was never able to go south at the time of weeding, partly because I was told that, even now, no stranger to the district would dream of going there at that season. Had I gone there in person, the negative result would have been ethnologically disappointing, the positive distinctly unpleasant; so I abstained. When I tried, as always in such cases, to test the general statement by historical fact, to find out how many people had been thus ill-treated—who, when and on what occasion—I invariably drew a blank. I always received the same answer: "Oh, people are so afraid that no one would dare to come near." The only concrete argument in support of its truth was that Misipelosi and Misimoytena (the Rev. S. B. Fellowes, the first Missionary, and the Hon. M. H. Moreton, the first Resident Magistrate) had been afraid to face the *yausa*, and that no *gumanuma* (white man) had ever dared to do so. I also was begged not to make any attempt to go south in the *yausa* season, and I obeyed the advice. And I thus became another proof of the reality of this custom to the natives.

So I was left with the principal question unanswered: is this custom, so exactly and minutely described, so prominent in the native interest, a fact in the sense that it has been really practised? or only in so far that it would be practised should occasion arise? Or is it merely one of those customs which only exist in belief and in legend, and have never had any basis in actual occurrence?

The most that can be said with certainty is that the *yausa*, if it happened at all, happened extremely rarely; for even less in the olden days than now would a stranger

have occasion to visit those inhospitable regions, which were on a hostile footing with all their neighbours and always ready to harm a stranger in one way or another. Taking the tradition at its lowest value, it is a standing myth, backed up by lively interest and a strong belief. It gives the women of the region a bellicose attitude, it surrounds them at weeding time with an absolute taboo, and gives their communal work in the garden the character of a sex privilege. The only parallel for the custom in folk-lore is the legend about Kaytalugi, the land of the sexually insatiable women (see ch. xii, 4); and in actual fact, the orgiastic nature, in the south, of the *kayasa* of the tug-of-war and of the erotic scratching, and the greater sexual coarseness to be found there.[1]

It is characteristic that all the natives are interested in this custom and amused by it. Whenever any cognate or associated subject is discussed—gardens, communal work, the position of women, fighting or sex—the *yausa*

[1] In this matter parallels might be found perhaps among tribes further south on the d'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, and on the mainland of New Guinea. I was told by a white trader that on the southern shore of Normanby Island there are several orgiastic performances and festivities. On certain occasions a small hut with a very high front gable is constructed and passes under the name of "the entrance of the body." In this hut a girl will remain during the festivity, boys will visit her semi-publicly, and have intercourse with her one after another. Again, among the natives of the south coast, east of Orangerie Bay (the Da'ui and Su'au), several boys sometimes cohabit with one girl, each in the presence of another: a procedure which would be repugnant to the Trobriander's finer sensibilities. On the other hand, such tribes, for instance, as the Dobuans of the d'Entrecasteaux Archipelago and the Mailu, are considerably more restrained in sexual matters than either the Trobrianders or the other Southern Massim. Compare C. G. Seligman, op. cit., on the Southern Massim, chap. xxxviii, "Courtship, Betrothal, and Marriage," and chap. xliii, "Morals." Compare also my account of the Mailu in the "Natives of Mailu," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia,* 1915.

is dragged in, and the natives embark on detailed and graphic descriptions, until it becomes the anthropologist's bugbear. Only once did I find it really useful. In one of the surly, reticent and coarse communities on the lagoon, there was special difficulty in finding suitable informants. One afternoon I was working with a group of unwilling informants, seated under a large banyan tree on the shore of the lagoon. It was one of those slack and sterile periods so well-known to the field-worker, when he discovers only gaps and inconsistencies in his information, becomes cross and bored with his native instructors, and they with him; when the imprisonment in a profoundly alien and emotionally meaningless cultural atmosphere weighs heavily and everything tempts to desertion at any cost. In such moods the lagoon landscape, so charming and so monotonous, symbolized this temptation, luring my eyes towards the dimly visible Koya, the southern mountains of the Amphlett and d'Entrecasteaux archipelagoes—where lay my road back to civilization. I looked at the scene on the beach (pl. 63) and envied some visitors from the south, who were due to sail home in a day or two. Conversation was flagging, and I could get nothing out of my informants, until we happened on the subject of the *yausa*. Immediately the natives became voluble and dramatic; their laughter and animation attracted other people, and soon I was surrounded by a group of men, among whom I was able to find some tolerably good informants for my future work. At the same time, I had a practical demonstration of the contrast between the way in which such a custom

is represented by those who have it, and by those who do not. By the local men it was obviously caricatured as a shameful and savage habit; the men's derisive laughter and amused exaggerations were a clear indication of how superior they felt to the benighted heathen who practised it. But the southern visitors, some of whom had come from Okayaulo and Bwadela, the home of the *yausa*, took, in a later conversation, a different view, showing no embarrassment whatever. They told me boastfully that no stranger ever dared to enter their district at that time, that they themselves were the only people free to walk about, that their women were the best garden-weeders and the most powerful people in the island. The two districts have been in contact for centuries, they speak the same language and have an identical culture. Yet neither the custom of *yausa* nor the mental attitude which characterizes it have begun to diffuse. The mental attitudes are correlated and fit into each other, but each district adheres to its own prerogative of superiority, which consists in contradicting the other's point of view.

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